

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL PANEL
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr M F Saltern - Chairman

ø Cllr J A Westacott - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr R F Croad

* Cllr R J Tucker

ø Cllr T J Hewitt

* Denotes attendance

ø Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources;
Item 5 (Minute PP.10/08 below refers): Head of Improvement.

PP.8/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 28 May 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PP.9/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none were made.

PP.10/08 **HEAD OF IMPROVEMENT TO GIVE A VERBAL REPORT**

The Head of Improvement made reference to the findings obtained from the Staff Survey 2007/08 (as outlined at Appendix A).

In discussion on these findings, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Panel expressed its concern at the comparatively high levels of respondents who felt discriminated against in the last two years. In echoing these concerns, officers made specific reference to racial discrimination and discrimination on the grounds of an offending past being too high. In not wishing to under estimate the findings in these areas, it was felt that such was the very small minority who could be discriminated against, it was almost inevitable that they could on occasion feel this way;

- (b) It was noted that feedback obtained since the Staff Survey was carried out during November / December 2007 had suggested that a number of issues had since been addressed and improved upon, with particular emphasis given to improved communications. Furthermore, the Chairman advised that good progress was now being made on the managerial matters of staff receiving both performance appraisals and return to work interviews following a sickness absence. In addition, the Panel also welcomed the development of a Competency Framework for appraisals;
- (c) On the subject of staff feeling valued by Members, the Panel felt there to be a delicate balance between Members being visible, without being deemed to be interfering;
- (d) With regard to the recent publication of the draft proposal for unitary local government in Devon, the Panel stressed the importance of the role of Members and the Strategic Management Team (SMT) in remaining positive and being visible to maintain staff morale. A Member felt it important that SMT and/or Members create a strategy to address the inevitable uncertainty at this time;
- (e) In order to gauge annual trends, Members wished for a similar survey to be undertaken during November / December 2008, with the Chairman of the Panel wishing to have some input into the draft survey prior to its final production.

PP.11/08 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

PP.12/08 **HR STAFFING REPORT**

Members considered an exempt report which sought approval for the revised arrangements of the HR Service area.

Whilst advising of their support for the presented proposals, a Member requested that the particular proposal as outlined in paragraph 10 of the presented exempt report be formally reviewed by the Panel during October / November 2008.

RESOLVED

That:-

- i. the proposal to increase the staffing establishment of the HR Service, to include an additional Senior Personnel Officer and a part time Payroll Officer, be endorsed, subject to the confirmation of contributions from West Devon Borough Council and Teignbridge District Council;
- ii. the salary arrangements for the Payroll Manager be approved, as set out in the presented report.

PP.13/08 **STRATEGIC HR OVERVIEW**

The Panel considered an exempt report which gave an update on the latest position with regard to staff resources and responsibilities at a senior level.

Members endorsed the strategic overview as outlined in the presented report.

RESOLVED

- i) That the decision not to fill the post of Strategic Director (Operations) be noted;
- ii) That a new post of Policy Implementation Officer be endorsed, with the salary and/or secondment arrangements delegated to the Chief Executive to agree, in consultation with the Leader and the Chairman of the Panel;
- iii) That the salaries of the Strategic Director (Community) and Strategic Director (Resources) be increased as detailed in the presented report.

(Meeting commenced at 11.30 am and concluded at 12.30 pm).

Chairman