

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Resources

Date of Meeting: 24th March 2010
Report of: Paul Bradshaw, Head of HR and OD
Subject/Title: Notice Periods for JNC Chief Officers

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the notice periods of Chief Officers employed by Cheshire East Council.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the notice periods for JNC Chief Officers (grade 13 and above) be increased to 3 months on either side, in line with the Conditions of Service stated in the Chief Officer Handbook and recognised good practice across the public and private sectors.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that we continue to attract and retain employees in key management and leadership roles in an increasingly competitive market. As part of our focus on employee engagement we are considering which elements of the 'total reward package' employee's value. Chief Officers are expected to serve three months notice however in return, the Council offers statutory notice. Having equal notice periods on either side should improve motivation and morale and strengthen the psychological contract.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 None

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 None

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 None

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 None

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 None

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 None

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 It is recognised within both the public and private sectors that 3 months is a 'reasonable' and appropriate notice period for senior managers.

11.2 Indeed, the national conditions of employment for Chief Officers provide for 3 months' notice unless they are varied locally by mutual agreement.

11.3 At the Council's request, the North West Employers Organisation has recently conducted a survey on this point and established that the vast majority of Councils in the North West who responded provided for three months' notice on either side.

11.4 Cheshire East's terms and conditions, however, are out of kilter with national conditions and good practice in the region. This is the case as the Council's conditions mirror those of the former Cheshire County Council, rather than the conditions of Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield which all provided for 3 months' notice.

11.5 It is also recognised that in order to attract good quality, high calibre candidates, a fair and equitable contract of employment is essential. Currently, Cheshire East's contract of employment for senior managers on Chief Officer conditions (i.e. grade 13 and above) offers unequal terms with regard to notice; the employee is required to serve three months' notice but the employer (Cheshire East) is only required to give statutory notice (ranging from zero to 12 weeks' notice with continuous service) should it wish to terminate a contract of employment.

11.6 As an authority we could face issues with recruitment, retention and employee engagement amongst our key managers and leaders by failing to address these inequitable notice periods. It is therefore recommended that a 3 month notice period apply on either side.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 None

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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