

## **Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee**

### **Written Submission by Councillor Warters in respect of agenda item 6.** **Recruitment of Head of Paid Services**

The recruitment of a new Head of Paid Service opens up a number of opportunities for City of York Council to improve the professional management of the council in a more cost effective way for the council tax payers of York.

I do hope those opportunities are taken.

I well remember 'opposition group leader's briefings in 2014' when there was agreement to make a very symbolic change in the title given to the Head of Paid Service and that was to dispense with the overblown CEO title and return to a more grounded 'Town Clerk and Head of Paid Service' title which of course would then require dispensing with the similarly overblown 'Director' and 'Assistant Director' titles below returning to 'Head' and 'Assistant Head' of the relevant services.

This was sadly dispensed with after the coalition council formed after the 2015 election.

It is time to re-examine such a proposal which the appointment of a new Head of Paid Service presents the council membership - time to rebalance the relationship between the elected members and the appointed staffers of which the titles granted to senior roles is the starting point.

The timing of this recruitment process is also very opportune and it is disappointing to see Option D dismissed by the staffers so readily.

The consideration of a 'shared chief officer' with another authority ought to be first and foremost in the minds of members given the recent hugely expensive bureaucracy set up in conjunction with North Yorkshire Council and that is of course the York & North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

If such a consideration is not to be taken then what does this signal to the council taxpayers of York and indeed the rest of North Yorkshire?

Why does the current set up merit THREE Chief Officers and associated staffing at huge cost to the taxpayer?

Failure to examine shared working arrangements at the very head of these organisations is a failure of Staffing Matters & Urgency Committee to act on behalf of the taxpayers and I might add the ordinary workforce constantly facing cutbacks and redundancies in their working lives.

If SMU do not seriously consider the opportunity to share a Head of Paid Service between the CA and NYC then it will be imperative that any new Head of Paid Service recruited just to head up CYC is required to actually LIVE within the CYC boundaries and attend CYC offices every working day.

Either through recruitment of a Head of Paid Service already living within the CYC boundaries or requiring any successful candidate to relocate within six months of appointment this must finally be addressed, such a policy can then be applied to any future recruitments of senior staffers at 'Head of Service' level in the future.

It's something I've asked for on numerous occasions with senior recruitments before and it's about time it was implemented (as I've shown before other organisations like the NHS have no qualms about such requirements) it is only right and proper to try and instill a greater degree of pride in York that senior staffers whose work has such an impact on the residents actually live in the area their decisions impact.

A requirement for any future Head of Paid Service to attend CYC Offices or attend CYC meetings off site every working day is also important, the head of the organisation should be setting an example to the rest of the workforce and 'working from home'/'hybrid working' should not be an option even considered for the most senior post.

I do hope SMU take the opportunities offered with this new appointment being able to look seriously at different solutions especially in the financially constrained times CYC are in, simply 'going with the flow' and following the recommendations of the senior staffers advising yourselves will certainly not benefit the taxpayers of York although it might benefit those in the 'system' .