

HUMAN RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY PANEL

A meeting of the Human Resources and Diversity Panel was held on Thursday 8 October 2009 in the Members Conference Room at Police Headquarters.

PRESENT: Mr Aslam Hanif (Chair), Mr Ted Cox JP, Cllr Ron Lowes, Cllr Paul Kirton, Miss Pam Andrews-Mawer, Mr Peter Race MBE (ex officio).

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS Cllr Hazel Pearson OBE, Cllr Victor Tumilty, Mr Peter Hadfield.

OFFICIALS: Mr Norman Wright, Mr John Bage and Mrs C Hunter (CE)
DCC Derek Bonnard, Miss Kate Rowntree (CC).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Dave McLuckie (ex officio), Cllr Caroline Barker (Vice Chair) and Mr Chris Coombs

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 7 AUGUST 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 7 August 2009 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENTS – POLICE STAFF

The Deputy Chief Constable presented a report to inform Members that the Force had received a request from a member of police support staff requesting that they be granted flexible retirement.

Members were informed that flexible retirements were introduced into the Local Government Pension Scheme in April 2006 as a discretionary provision which allowed employees, with the employer's consent, to reduce their hours or move to a lower graded position and withdraw the pension benefits already accrued.

Members sought clarification regarding the position of flexible and / or early retirements, and requested information on any other options available to police support staff.

The Deputy Chief Constable informed Members that a paper will be brought to a future meeting of the Panel to inform on the guidance and options available to employees.

The Deputy Chief Constable requested that the Police Authority consider this application for flexible retirement.

ORDERED that;

1. the request for flexible retirement be refused.

FORCE VETTING OFFICER

Members were informed that to enable the effective operation of Cleveland Police, it is of fundamental importance that its Officers and Police Staff act responsibly and honestly. This applies equally to other individuals, such as contractors and consultants, who are provided with access to the Force's sensitive information and facilities.

The ACPO Vetting Policy created an understanding of the principles of vetting and established uniformity in vetting procedures. The policy also recommended that procedures should be co-ordinated through a single point of contact.

Members were informed that there could be a reputational risk to the Force and the Authority if the correct vetting procedures are not adhered to.

Members sought clarification on the calculation of risks associated with considering such appointments and whether it was prudent in the current economic climate to do so.

The Deputy Chief Constable informed Members that there were a number of areas of risk associated with the management of sensitive information and facilities, and that these aspects had been considered before this request. Similarly, Members were informed that should such a request be agreed, then the Chief Constable would review the position in twelve months.

ORDERED that;

1. the report be noted.
2. the application for a Force Vetting Officer be agreed.
3. a review of the post of Force Vetting Officer, to be brought back to the Panel in twelve months, be agreed.

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Strategy & Performance Manager informed Members on the scheduled 6-monthly update on the operation of CPA Single Equality Scheme, which was first accepted by the Police Authority Executive on 14th June 2007.

Members were informed that Cleveland Police Authority published an overarching Single Equality Scheme in 2007 that covered all six strands of diversity. The Scheme additionally covered statutory responsibilities under the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations.

The Strategy & Performance Manager informed Members that the CPA Single Equality Scheme is progressing as expected, with action plan items being attended to and equality impact assessments being carried out, as required.

ORDERED that;

1. the updated Action Plan at Appx A to the report be agreed.
2. the information on access to Force services and buildings at Item 10 of Appx A, be noted.
3. the recent re-assessments of the equality impact assessments carried out by CPA staff at Appx C to the report be noted.
4. the regulatory requirement for all public sector organisations to review their disability and gender schemes after 3 years, be noted.