

By: Chief Executive
To: Senior Officer Appointment and Conditions Committee – 19 June 2013
Subject: REVISION OF APPRAISAL PROCEDURE FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Classification: Unrestricted

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to give further consideration to the process surrounding the appraisal of the Chief Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the proposed changes to the process for the appraisal of the Chief Executive (para 5 and **Appendix 1** refer).

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

COMMENTS

Background

1. At the Chief Executive's appraisal in April 2011 Members agreed that the Procedure being used should be reviewed but, at a subsequent meeting of this Committee, it was agreed to continue with the existing methodology on the understanding that it would be kept under review. In line with Members' views this report revisits proposals to change the Procedure in order to bring it more into line with best practice across local government.

Current System

2. Since the Authority was created in 1998 it has operated an Appraisal Procedure for the Chief Executive. Appraisals have taken place annually with a Panel of Members drawn from each political group and supported by an independent advisor. The Panel approach was borne out of the original political construct of the Authority in its early years and at a time when there were less politically contentious issues to manage. However, the need to drive change in a period of severe financial constraint and the changed political landscape all suggest that the Panel approach is no longer appropriate and that now is the time to adopt a 'best practice' approach as outlined below.

Best Practice Approach

3. As reported previously to this Committee, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) recommended over five years ago that all Chief Executives should receive regular appraisals and that these should incorporate an independent person to help with the assessment. SOLACE also advised that the Appraiser should be one person, namely the Chairman/Leader of the majority group, and this is consistent with the experience of benchmark organisations in the public sector. Having the appraisal conducted by one Member ensures that the appraisal remains focussed on the Chief Executive's individual performance and does not become a forum for political debate. A one-to-one meeting also allows for more honest revelation from the individual and discussion about potential areas for development. This may be inhibited by a discussion involving more than two people.
4. Research carried out across other local authorities and fire and rescue authorities suggests that this is now the approach adopted by the majority of organisations and that different mechanisms are used to allow input from the Leaders of other political groups and senior colleagues, using tools such as 360° appraisals.

Revised Approach

5. Attached at **Appendix 1** is the proposed amended Procedure for the Performance Appraisal of the Chief Executive. It is the same as the current arrangement except that it now incorporates the change from a Panel approach to that of one-to-one meetings between the Chairman and Chief Executive. An independent adviser would be employed to gather evidence from other sources to allow for an in-depth review of the Chief Executive's personal performance. The independent adviser, and the other sources (which would be expected to include the Leaders of the other political groups and senior colleagues), would be agreed by the Chairman in discussion with the Chief Executive.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6. The impact should be a positive one for the individual who is being appraised and allow a more in-depth approach to judging individual versus organisational performance.

RECOMMENDATION

7. Members are requested to:
 - 7.1 Approve the proposed changes to the process for the appraisal of the Chief Executive (para 5 and **Appendix 1** refer).