

EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES PDS COMMITTEE

23rd November 2016

7. Questions from Members of the Public for Written response

From Susan Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group

1. In order to ensure the safety of the arrangements to discharge the Statutory roles of the Director of Children's Services, the 7.5.2013 Care Services & Education Scrutiny Committees resolved that: "*the Assurance Test be repeated and reported annually*"

(a) Was the Test repeated and reported in 2014?

(b) If not, why?

Reply:

As previously advised, in response to similar questions to the Executive Meeting of 18th October 2016, the "Assurance Test" report which was considered at the joint meetings of the Care Services and Education PDS Committee on 7th May 2013 and 25th February 2015, was intended to be biennial.

A New Executive Director of Education, Care & Health Services, with a Deputy Chief Executive status, joins the authority on 1st December 2016 with a specific focus on children's services.

2. For 2011/12 – 2015/16, what were the costs each year associated with the merger of the CYP & ACS Departments, and delays in appointing the DCS, for:-

(a) Officers to undertake additional duties, (eg. Acting up into statutory roles)?

Reply:

Following the departure of the previous Executive Director, three statutory direct reports received honoraria payments from 1st July 2015 at circa £9K in total as of July 2016.

(b) Chief Officer Redundancy; Retirement; & 'Compensation for loss of office' packages?

Reply:

Again, as previously advised in response to a similar question to the Care Services Special Portfolio Holder meeting on 16th August 2016 and the Care Services PDS

Committee on 13th September 2016, the previous Executive Director left by mutual consent in a legally binding settlement agreement.

Following the initial merger of the two departments, there were two Chief Officer redundancies and the associated costs were covered in the published annual statement of accounts.

3. (a) Since 2011, when have severance packages exceeding £100,000, been reported to Committee, in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement?

Reply:

The severance element of the Pay Policy Statement (pursuant to the Localism Act) did not come in until 2014/15 because the relevant guidance was not issued in time for the preceding pay policy. Pursuant to the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Pay Policy Statements, any relevant severance details will be reported to the Audit Sub-Committee, without breaching individual confidentiality or the terms of any settlement agreements.

(b) What are the criteria used to decide when to offer a Chief Officer:- (i) a 'Compromise Agreement? (ii) Compensation for loss of Office?

Reply:

The Council takes seriously its fiduciary duty, hence the use of compromise/settlement agreements are in the legal/financial interests of the Council. These are the main criteria applied on a case-by-case basis, taking into account advice from the Council's Legal and Human Resources officers.