

## Westmoreland and Furness Council 22.7.22

### 1. Code of Conduct.

An alteration has been made regarding declaration of interests and members serving on the current district or county councils.

### 2. Chief Officer's Pay Policy

Jonathan Brook JB, Leader, LD): We (selection board) agreed to a salary of £170k for the chief executive. This is in line with the salaries of chief executives in other areas.

Ben Shirley (BS, C): LGA's (Local Government Association) data is from authorities that are significantly different to this one. £140k is the median and we are offering £30k more. We should have a pay scale and have fiscal responsibility for tax payers' money.

Andy Connell (LD): The median he refers to was in 2018. I don't know if this is relevant to 2022.

Andy Coles (L): I support the £170k in the interest of retention. Councillor Shirley referred to 2018 data.

Tony Callister (L): This is a responsible figure.

Cllr Thornton (LD): If you add the three salaries of the current chief officers (of the three district councils) there will be considerable saving.

Council Officer (I could not see her name): This is what is recommended given that we want to be a modern employer.

Vote: All Lib-Dems and Labour councillors voted in favour. The leader of the Conservatives voted in favour, all other Conservative councillors voted against.

### 3. Appointment of Chief Executive

Virginia Taylor (VT, LD): The indicative salary is in the region of £170k. The selection board recommended the appointment of Sam (Samantha) Plum to the post with a salary of £170k per annum. The start of the appointment would be 1.12.22.

Phil Dew (PD, C): I can see some advantages in continuing with a person we know but I see some disadvantages. There is lack of experience in delivery at county council level. I am not sure she is able to lead at this level. I think we could have had a fresh start.

Judy Filmore (Green Party): I was disappointed that Anti Racist Cumbria was not invited on to the selection board. I urge the council to fully engage with Anti Racist Cumbria.

VT: I am sure this was an omission.

JB: Councillor Dew doesn't have the advantage of knowing the whole of the experience of Sam Plum. She has had previous experience with Bradford Council.

There was another query from another Conservative councillor who was concerned about the expense of the selection process.

Officer: It's a very robust assessment. We had a number of external candidates.

Councillor Sanderson (LD): I was there throughout the process. It was very rigorous. The fact that one was more local, this did not have any bias on the process. The whole thing was professional and thorough.

Bill McEwan (L): How can Cllr Dew question that the process was not thorough?

Tony Callister (L): I do shake my head, the councillor should look at the bigger picture before commenting. The process was sound.

Anne Burns (L): Cllr Dew, I think that it is amazing that you would say that the candidate does not have the experience, you were on the panel. There were three other candidates. I am amazed that you say it wasn't a professionally made decision. There were other panels who made the same decision.

PD: I have just expressed a point of view, which I should be able to do in a democracy.

Cllr Atkinson (LD): This is a difficult job and I hope we will give her our full support.

BS(C): We are the opposition and it is our job to scrutinise. I think the personal criticism of PD, who was just doing his job, was unfair.

JB: PD said that Sam does not have adequate experience but that has been corrected.

Vote: All Lib-Dems and Labour councillors voted in favour as did the leader of the Conservatives, the other members of her party abstained.

#### 4. Strategic Financial Planning

Cllr Jarvis (LD) discussed the report. There is no new money from central government.

I had to leave the meeting at this point. There is an interesting table in the report:

Business Rates.	Total. £135.4 m.	WAF £52.3 m.	Cumberland. £76.5m.	Fire £6.5
Council Tax:	£302.5m	£144.1m	£143.5m	£14.8m
Corporate Grants.	£86.5m.	£30.5m.	£49.2m.	£6.8m
Total Corporate Resources Share.	£524.5m.	£226.9m. 43.3%	£269.2m 51.3%	£28.2m 5.4%