

## **Council**

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**Date of Meeting:** 20 February 2020

**Report Title:** Appointment of the Chief Executive, (Head of Paid Service),  
Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

**Senior Officer:** Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services

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### **1. Report Summary**

1.1. To inform Council that at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020, Staffing Committee interviewed a number of candidates for the post of Chief Executive and wishes to recommend an appointment to Council for approval.

### **2. Recommendations**

That Council:-

- 2.1 confirms the recommendation of Staffing Committee that Lorraine O'Donnell be appointed as Cheshire East Council's Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) with effect from the earliest possible date to be arranged;
- 2.2 confirms that the salary of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) be £151,000 a year in accordance with the Council's agreed Pay Policy Statement; and
- 2.3 appoints Lorraine O'Donnell as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer pursuant to the Representation of the People Act 1983.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 In accordance with the Constitution, Council must approve the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive as a Statutory Officer.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1. Not applicable.

## **5. Background**

### **5.1 Appointment of Chief Executive**

5.2 The recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive has been conducted by Staffing Committee in accordance with the Council's Employment Procedure Rules. Four candidates were considered as part of the final selection process, following a rigorous assessment phase. This involved meetings with senior managers, local partners, Cabinet members, a discussion with a Staff Panel and a presentation and formal interview with the Staffing Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

5.3 The Staffing Committee Members agreed to recommend to Council that the position of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) should be offered to Lorraine O'Donnell on an inclusive salary of £151,000.

5.4 Lorraine O'Donnell has in excess of 25 years experience working in local authorities and her most recent position was Director of Transformation and Partnerships at Durham County Council.

### **5.5 Electoral Matters**

5.6 It is a statutory requirement that each local authority has an Electoral Registration Officer, pursuant to Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and a Returning Officer, pursuant to Section 35 of the 1983 Act. It is usual to appoint the same person to carry out both responsibilities, but this is not a requirement of the legislation.

5.8 Council is recommended to formally designate Lorraine O'Donnell as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. Under this designation, the Returning Officer will be responsible for the proper conduct of all Borough and Parish elections for the wards and parishes of the Borough of Cheshire East. The holder of this office also acts as the Acting Returning Officer for Parliamentary Elections and the Local Counting Officer for other elections or referenda held within the Borough.

5.9 The duties of both office holders are personal responsibilities quite separate to their normal responsibilities in their employment by the Council. Once appointed, the office holder is responsible to the Court for the proper carrying out of their duties.

5.10 The person designated as Electoral Registration Officer has a duty to maintain a register of parliamentary and local government electors and to take certain steps for the purpose of complying with that duty.

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

6.1.1. The designation of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) must be approved by Council in accordance with section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

6.1.2. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to appoint a Returning Officer and a Electoral Registration Officer from amongst its officers.

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. This post of Chief Executive is an established position within the Council's senior management structure and funded within the Council's existing staffing budgets.

6.2.2. With regard to Returning Officer fees, for each election the scale of fees is set by the Government and the Returning Officer is directly accountable in law to the Government in regards to their electoral duties. For Borough and Parish Council elections, the Returning Officer fee is calculated in accordance with an agreed Scale of Fees. The Scale of Fees is agreed between and used by the four Cheshire Authorities: Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council

### **6.3. Policy Implications**

6.3.1. There are no policy implications.

### **6.4. Equality Implications**

6.4.1. There are no equality implications.

### **6.5. Human Resources Implications**

6.5.1. Actions have been undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and appropriate policies and procedures.

### **6.6. Risk Management Implications**

6.6.1. Actions have been taken in accordance with appropriate policies and procedures.

### **6.7. Rural Communities Implications**

6.7.1. There are no implications for rural communities.

## **6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children**

6.8.1. There are no implications for children and young people/cared for children.

## **6.9. Public Health Implications**

6.9.1. There are no implications for public health.

## **6.10. Climate Change Implications**

6.10.1. There are no implications for climate change.

## **7. Ward Members Affected**

7.1. Not applicable.

## **8. Access to Information**

8.1. None applicable.

## **9. Contact Information**

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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