

Council

19 July 2023

Chief Executive Recruitment

Report of: Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

1. Council are being asked to note arrangements to recruit a permanent Chief Executive for Cheshire East Council, who will also hold the position of Head of Paid Service. This follows the resignation of the current Chief Executive, Dr Lorraine O'Donnell.
2. The report highlights the role of the Appointments Committee and their responsibility to recommend a suitable candidate alongside an appropriate remuneration package and associated changes to the pay policy statement.

Executive Summary

3. The Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council, Dr Lorraine O'Donnell, has submitted her resignation and is due to leave on 15 October 2023 to take up a new role as Chief Executive of Bradford City Council. The Chief Executive is also the Head of Paid Service, a statutory function of the Council, and is separately appointed as the Returning Officer.
4. The Council must have arrangements in place to discharge the functions of the Chief Executive on the departure of the outgoing Chief Executive.
5. The Chief Executive salary for Cheshire East Council is currently based on a spot salary. This is updated annually, via Full Council approval, within the Council's Pay Policy Statement. The Appointments Committee may consider Chief Executive appointments for similar sized Local Authorities to determine a suitable salary. This approach will allow the

Appointment Committee to ensure that the recruitment process is competitive and attracts the best calibre candidates to the role. This approach should reflect the relative size, complexity and ambition of the Council.

Recommendations:-

That Council:-

1. Note the resignation of the Chief Executive.
2. Note that the Appointments Committee will:
 - 2.1. Convene to undertake the recruitment and selection process, for a replacement Chief Executive, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules.
 - 2.2. Recommend appropriate changes to the Council's Pay Policy Statement that supports the appointment process.
 - 2.3. Recommend the proposed appointment to Council, alongside the recommended annual spot salary, before an offer of appointment is made to that person.
3. Note that the Appointments Committee may make recommendations to Council for interim arrangements for the role of Chief Executive if required.

Background

6. Following a recruitment process commencing in late 2019 the Council approved the appointment of Dr Lorraine O'Donnell to the post of Chief Executive at the Full Council meeting of 20 February 2020. She was appointed on a spot salary of £151,000.
7. The Council's Pay Policy recognises that from time to time, it is necessary to take account of the external pay levels in the labour market and alter pay levels to attract and retain employees with appropriate experience, skills and capacity.
8. Initial discussions with executive recruitment consultants support a review of the current remuneration package of £159,405 (per the Pay

Policy Statement 2023/24). The final recommended salary of the successful candidate will relate to relevant skills, experience and the labour market.

9. The Appointments Committee will carry out the review of current pay levels to ensure a suitable and competitive process. A requirement for additional pay can only be justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using data sources available from within the local government sector and outside, as appropriate.

Recruitment Proposals

10. Due to the competitive nature of the Chief Executive market, an Executive Search agency will be employed to support the recruitment process. This approach should ensure the Council is able to attract the widest possible talent pool.
11. The Appointments Committee is responsible for the recruitment and selection of the Chief Executive. The Committee will confirm the process, undertake the recruitment and selection, make a recommendation of a suitable candidate, and recommended the salary, to Council for approval.
12. An indicative timeline for the recruitment process is as follows:-

Time	Activity
July/August	Appointments Committee review recruitment process. Complete procurement of an Executive Search Agency. Draw up job criteria and job description and agree final design of the recruitment process.
September	Advertisements placed with closing date in conjunction with advice from the Executive Search Agency
October /November	Briefings for Members and Officers and establishment of required panels to complete final steps of the process Shortlisting and interviews
November	Proposal to Council * *Note: Current Council dates are 18 October 2023 and 13 December 2023

Interim Arrangements

13. The appointment of a Chief Executive and Returning Officer is a matter reserved to full Council irrespective of the length of the appointment. The next full Council meeting is the 18 October 2023. If interim arrangements are required Council will be asked to give any necessary approvals on that occasion.

Consultation and Engagement

14. The recommendations of the report do not require further consultation.

Reasons for Recommendations

15. The Council must have a Chief Executive, the Chief Executive is usually the Head of Paid Service. These roles have statutory obligations which must continue uninterrupted. An interim post may be required due to the seniority of the role and the need for clear visible leadership of the organisation as it continues to deliver its Corporate Plan priorities.
16. Interim arrangements are affordable within the available salary budgets relating to the senior management structure for 2023/24.

Other Options Considered

17. The Council must recruit a Chief Executive and appoint a Head of Paid Service and no other option was considered in respect of this.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

18. The recruitment of the Chief Executive and appointment of the Head of Paid Service is a matter for full Council, on the recommendation of the Appointments Committee. Under S4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 every local authority must designate one of its officers to be the Head of Paid Service.
19. Council will be invited to approve any updates to the Constitution and Council's Pay Policy if the recommendations of the Appointments Committee propose any changes to Chief Executive remuneration or the approved versions.
20. The Council must meet the statutory requirements to have a published senior management structure, an up to date pay policy and scheme of delegation.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

21. The pay for the Chief Executive, and potential interim arrangements, will be managed within existing budgets. The Appointments Committee will be advised of financial implications of any potential recommendations as required during the recruitment exercise.

Policy

22. The recruitment to the post of Chief Executive is key to the Council fulfilling all of its Corporate Plan commitments, and the leadership provided by this post will be central to ensuring that staff are able to deliver on member's priorities and meet the Council's financial commitments set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

23. There are no direct equality implications.
24. All equality considerations will be considered as part of the recruitment process for the Chief Executive recruitment process.

Human Resources

25. Actions will be carried out in accordance with the Constitution and appropriate Human Resources policies and procedures.

Risk Management

26. There is a risk that the Council will not be able to appoint a suitable candidate for the permanent post, but this risk will be reduced by using a Executive Search Agency and if an interim placement can be sourced as the Council will have continuity and leadership in place in its most senior role.
27. Ensuring that the pay is appropriate for the role will help us to secure the best possible field of candidates.

Rural Communities

28. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

29. There are no direct implications for Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (Send)

Public Health

30. There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

31. There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sara Barker, Head of Human Resources Sara.barker@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None