

OPEN

Council

26 February 2025

Appointment of the Executive Director Resources (s151)

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: C/21/24-25

Wards: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Council that, the Appointments Committee successfully completed the interview process for the post of Executive Director Resources (s151) as the Chief Finance Officer at its meeting on 13 February 2025.
- 2 The Appointments Committee therefore wishes to recommend an appointment to Council for approval.
- 3 To provide an update on the process for the appointment of the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Full Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the recommendation of the Appointments Committee that Ashley Hughes be appointed as Cheshire East Council's Executive Director Resources (s151) as the Chief Finance Officer at an annual salary of £142,951 (CX3) at a date to be confirmed.
2. Note that the Appointments Committee has decided not to proceed with the appointment to the role of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.

Background

- 4 The recruitment process for the post of Executive Director Resources (s151) as the Chief Finance Officer has been conducted by the Appointments Committee in accordance with the Council's Employment Procedure Rules.
- 5 The posts of Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer and Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer were advertised with a closing date of 5 January 2025.
- 6 There were 8 applications received for the Executive Director Resources post and 5 applications for the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer role.
- 7 On 16 January 2025, the Appointments Committee approved a longlist to progress to the assessment of technical ability and potential suitability as follows:
 - 7 candidates for the post of Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer.
 - 4 candidates for the post of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.
- 8 On 27 January 2025, having carefully considered the feedback from the assessment of technical ability and potential suitability, the Appointments Committee approved a shortlist of candidates to progress to the assessment centre and formal interview as follows:
 - 4 candidates for the post of Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer; and
 - 1 candidate for the post of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.
- 8 The Appointments Committee formally interviewed the shortlisted candidates for the two posts on 12 and 13 February 2025.
- 9 The Appointments Committee carefully considered the feedback on the shortlisted candidates from the panels for the assessment centre as well as candidate responses as the formal interview.
- 10 The Appointments Committee members agreed to recommend to Council that the preferred candidate, Ashley Hughes, be recommended to Council for appointment as the Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Office.

- 11 The Appointments Committee decided not to proceed with the appointment to the role of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer.

Proposed Candidate for Executive Director Resources (and S151)

- 12 Ashley Hughes has been Director of Resources and S151 at Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council since April 2023. Between 2020 and 2023, he was the Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 officer at the London Borough of Barnet. He oversaw financial strategy, treasury management, and major project delivery, including the Brent Cross Town regeneration. From 2018 to 2020, he served as Bi-Borough Head of Finance for Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, managing budgets exceeding £200 million.

Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer

- 13 The recruitment process for the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer will recommence in March 2025 in consultation with the Chair of the Appointments Committee.
- 14 The current temporary acting up arrangements in place will continue pending recruitment and the successful candidate taking up post.

Consultation and Engagement

- 15 No consultation or engagement is required as the recruitment to the post of Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer is a member appointment as set out in the Constitution.
- 16 In accordance with the Constitution, Council must approve the appointment of the Council's Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer is a Statutory Officer post.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 In accordance with the Constitution, Council has the responsibility for approving the appointment of the Council's Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer as the post is a Statutory Officer.

Other Options Considered

- 18 Not considered.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 19 The post of Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer is a Designated Statutory Officer role. In accordance with Cheshire East Council's Constitution, the Appointments Committee is responsible for selecting and recommending a preferred candidate to Full Council for this post before a formal offer of appointment is made to that person.
- 20 Council has the responsibility for approving the appointment of the Council's Executive Director Resources (and S151) as the Chief Finance Officer as the post is a Designated Statutory Officer.
- 21 A fair, transparent and objectively justified selection process with due regard to equality laws has been followed for the selection phase of the recruitment process to reduce the risk of potential legal challenge.
- 22 Any proposed salary or other relevant particulars of employment should comply with the Council's pay policy statement, pay framework and other relevant policies.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 23 The revised senior management structure was approved at full council on 16 October and 11 December 2024.
- 24 The Executive Director Resources (and S151) will be budgeted from 1 April 2025 and included in the MTFS and budget for the 2025/26 onwards.
- 25 The Council report noted that "there is a small difference between costs of the current structure versus the final structure, reflecting small variances in grading between temporary and permanent arrangement. These costs would need to be managed by the relevant services areas as would normally be case when appointing at a spot salary". This remains the case.
- 26 The budget for further stages of the senior management restructure will need to be confirmed on a case-by-case basis.

Policy

- 27 There are no policy implications.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 28 There are no equality implications.

Human Resources

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

Risk Management

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

Rural Communities

- 31 There are no implications to rural communities.

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

- 32 There are no implications to children and young people and cared for children.

Public Health

- 33 There are no public health implications

Climate Change

- 34 There is no implications on climate change.

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