

Appointments Committee

27 November 2023

Recruitment and Selection for post of Chief Executive

Report of: Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services

Report Reference No: AP/04/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide details of the assessment arrangements for shortlisted candidates as part of the recruitment and selection process for the appointment of the Chief Executive and Returning Officer. To agree the recommendation that Full Council approves the appointment of the preferred candidate as a spot salary of £[tbc].

Executive Summary

- 2 Following the resignation of Dr Lorraine O'Donnell from the post of Chief Executive, the Appointments Committee was convened to:
 - Undertake the recruitment and selection process, for a replacement Chief Executive, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules.
 - Recommend appropriate changes to the Council's Pay Policy Statement that supports the appointment process.
 - Recommend the proposed appointment to Council, alongside the recommended annual spot salary, before an offer of appointment is made to that person.
 - Note that the Appointments Committee may make recommendations to Council for interim arrangements for the role of Chief Executive if required.
- 3 The Appointments Committee has been undertaking these tasks through a mixture of informal and formal meetings with the support from Cheshire East

officers and Faerfield, Cheshire East Council's procured executive search partner.

- 4 The Pay Policy Statement has been amended by Full Council on the recommendation of the Appointments Committee so that the salary range for the post of Chief Executive is £170,000 to £190,000.
- 5 David Parr OBE has been appointed to the post of Interim Chief Executive which was approved by Full Council.
- 6 The permanent post of Chief Executive has been advertised with 14 applications received. Eight of which were long-listed for a technical interview from which four were invited for further assessment and a formal interview with the Appointments Committee.
- 7 [name to be inserted] is the candidate recommended to Full Council for appointment to the post of Chief Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Appointments Committee recommends that Council:

1. Note the recruitment and selection process completed by the Committee to provide a suitable candidate for the permanent role of Chief Executive.
2. Approve the appointment of the preferred candidate, [name to be inserted], at a spot salary of £[tbc].
3. In addition, agree to the appointment of [name to be inserted] as the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

Background

- 8 On 19 July 2023, Full Council were asked to note the resignation of Dr Lorraine O'Donnell from the post of Chief Executive. Council was also asked to note that the Appointments Committee would:

Recommendation 2.1: Convene to undertake the recruitment and selection process, for a replacement Chief Executive, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules.

Recommendation 2.2: Recommend appropriate changes to the Council's Pay Policy Statement that supports the appointment process.

Recommendation 2.3: Recommend the proposed appointment to Council, alongside the recommended annual spot salary, before an offer of appointment is made to that person.

Recommendation 3: Note that the Appointments Committee may make recommendations to Council for interim arrangements for the role of Chief Executive if required.

- 9 The Appointments Committee has been undertaking these tasks through a mixture of informal and formal meetings.
- 10 Following a compliant procurement exercise, the Appointments Committee appointed Faerfield Limited as the executive search agency to support the recruitment and selection process in accordance with recommendation 2.1.
- 11 The Committee recommended changes to the pay Policy Statement in accordance with recommendation 2.2. Full Council agreed these changes on 18 October 2023 and amended the Pay Policy Statement so that the salary range for the post of Chief Executive is £170,000 to £190,000.
- 12 The Committee recommended the appointment of David Parr OBE as Interim Chief Executive in accordance with recommendation 3. Full Council agreed the appointment on 18 October 2023.
- 13 The job advertisement for the permanent Chief Executive role was published on 21 September 2023 and closed on Friday, 13 October 2023. Faerfield, executive search partner, recommended appropriate extensions to support the Committee in having a wide choice of candidates.
- 14 There were 14 applications received, of which eight were longlisted for a technical assessment during the week commencing 30 October 2023. The technical assessment was undertaken by Faerfield with David Parr, Interim Chief Executive, as the technical expert.
- 15 On 6 November 2023, following the technical assessments, the Appointments Committee received feedback on each of the longlisted candidates from Faerfield and David Parr on their technical ability and potential suitability for the post of Chief Executive. This information enabled the Appointments Committee to shortlist candidates for further assessment and formal interview on 27 November 2023.
- 16 Following careful consideration of the feedback, four candidates were shortlisted for further assessment and formal interview on 27 November 2023.
- 17 [name to be inserted] is the candidate recommended to Full Council for appointment and a short briefing on this candidate is provided at Appendix 1.

Selection Process for the Shortlisted Candidates

18 The framework for the further assessment and formal interview arrangements for 27 November 2023 can be found in Appendix 2.

Electoral Matters

- 19 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 common to appoint the same person to carry out both responsibilities, but this is not a requirement of the legislation.
- 20 David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance (Monitoring Officer) is currently the interim Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.
- 21 The Appointments Committee recommends to Full Council that [preferred candidate] is designated as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.
- 22 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. This approach enables the Interim Chief Executive to concentrate on other priority issues for the organisation during their tenure.
- 23 The duties of both office holders for electoral matter are personal responsibilities and 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.
- 24 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.

Consultation and Engagement

25 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

26 In accordance with the Constitution, the Appointments Committee is required to undertake the recruitment and selection process for Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules.

27 The recommendations confirm that the Committee has now fulfilled all the relevant requirements approved by Full Council at its meeting of 19th July 2023.

Other Options Considered

28 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

29 The appointment of the Head of Paid Service is a matter for Full Council, on the recommendation of the Appointments Committee. Under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 every local authority must designate one of its officers to be the Head of Paid Service.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

30 The salary for the Chief Executive is managed within existing Corporate Services budgets. The costs of the recruitment exercise is covered within the HR supplies and services budget. The costs are contained within the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Policy

31 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 members' priorities and meet the Council's financial commitments set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

32 There are no direct equality implications.

33 All equality considerations will be taken into account as part of the recruitment process for the Chief Executive recruitment process.

Human Resources

34 All actions have been undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and appropriate HR policies and procedures.

Rural Communities

35 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)

36 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

37 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

38 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:	Appendix 1 – Summary of career history in respect of the preferred candidate. Appendix 2 – Framework for Assessment and Formal interview
Background Papers:	None

Appendix 1

Summary of Preferred Candidate (TBC)

Further Assessment Activities for Shortlisted Candidates

Activity	When	Comments
Psychometric assessment	w/c 6 November to allow for feedback to the candidates and appointments committee	Psychometric questionnaires
Leader and Deputy Leader session	Prior to 27 November 2023 (Teams/in person)	Discussion Session with individual candidates
Partners session	Prior to 27 November 2023 (Teams)	<p>Facilitated discussion / interview with partner focus. Suggested make-up of panel (subject to availability):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS • LEP • Fire Authority • Chamber of Commerce • CVSCE • Active Cheshire • Health Watch Cheshire <p>Open discussion with feedback to Appointments Committee.</p>

Employees panel	On 27 November 2023 (in person)	<p>Format:</p> <p>Structured conversation</p> <p>Representatives from the Champions group</p> <p>Discussion Topic:</p> <p>Considering our commitment within the Employee Deal, how would you, as Chief Executive, motivate and inspire the workforce?</p>
Conversation with Interim Chief Executive	Prior to 27 November 2023 (Teams)	Informal meeting/conversation - 'Working for Cheshire East Council'
CLT panel	On 27 November 2023 (in person)	<p>Representatives from Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>Open discussion with feedback to Appointments Committee.</p>
Meet members	Prior to 27 November 2023 (Teams)	<p>Group of 'non Appointment Committee' members.</p> <p>Cllr Laura Crane Cllr Liz Braithwaite (other Councillors tbc)</p> <p>Open discussion with feedback to Appointments Committee.</p>

Appointments Committee	On 27 November 2023 (in person)	Format: Formal, structured interview and presentation. Topic for presentation: Under your leadership as Chief Executive, what would be your priorities for the first six months? What would you hope to have achieved after three years and then five years? (Maximum of 10 minutes followed by questions of clarification from the interview panel)
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