



**REPORT TO:** Employment and Staffing Committee 25 April 2019

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER:** Leader

**LEAD OFFICER:** Head of People and Organisational Development

---

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT**

### **Purpose**

1. Following the early retirement of the Chief Executive on 28 February 2019 and the Interim appointment of Michael John Hill, the Council needs to give consideration to the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. This report appraises Employment and Staffing Committee of options and considerations for discussion.
2. The Employment and Staffing Committee (or panel of the committee) is responsible for the recruitment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, including the agreement of a Job Description and Person Specification, advertising and selection process, and recommendation to Full Council. The Committee should also decide whether the position should be advertised externally and if so how it should be advertised and who should run the external recruitment process.
3. The remit of the Employment and Staffing Committee is to recommend to full Council arrangements in respect of the roles of Chief Executive Officer, Head of the Paid Service, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

### **Recommendations**

4. That the Employment and Staffing Committee:
  - a) Note the content and the legal requirements set out within the report;
  - b) Consider the options and implications set out in the report; indicate which option is to be taken forward for the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer and Head of Paid Service and form a panel to undertake the work associated with the preferred option.
  - c) Agree to the engagement of external recruitment consultants to support the Council.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. Under the provisions of s4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council must have an officer appointed as the Head of Paid Service, and such appointment must be approved by full Council. The Council appointed Mr Michael Hill, as Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 1 March 2019 until a permanent appointment is made. He was also appointed as the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
6. The appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is subject to full Council approval.
7. Interim arrangements have resulted in a need to review and temporarily change senior officer structures to ensure that capacity is available to meet the needs of the Council in the short term whilst a permanent appointment is made. This is not sustainable in the longer term and does not provide the strategic capacity required to deliver the Business Plan or organisational changes. Therefore, it is important to progress the process to recruit as soon as possible.

## **Background**

8. The Employment and Staffing Committee (or panel of the committee) is responsible for making decisions on the recruitment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service as outlined in the Constitution. The Committee should give full consideration to the options and give direction. The Committee can make recommendations on appointments but the decision to appoint an individual must be made by full Council.
9. The appointment of a panel is set out in the Constitution:

“ Ad hoc panel of at least five councillors, comprising three Members of the Employment Committee chosen by the Chairman of the Committee (or the Vice-Chairman in the absence of the Chairman) along with the Leader of Council and the relevant Lead Cabinet Member for Finance and Staffing. So far as circumstances allow, the Chairman shall ensure the panel membership complies with Council policy and good practice on equalities and involve the Cabinet and other relevant group(s) of members in the selection process.”

The appointment panel should be as diverse as possible and follow best practice for equality and inclusion purposes.

## **Considerations**

10. For the reasons set out at paragraphs 5, 6, 7 the Council must commence a process to recruit and appoint a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
11. The Council has an ambitious Business Plan and, has commenced an organisational review. In order to deliver on its ambitions and objectives as well as taking forward the organisational review and change, it will require stability at leadership level and clear management direction which will come from the top of the organisation. This must flow from the Chief Executive and down through the management team.

## **Recruitment Process**

### Permanent Appointment Process

12. The recruitment of a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is the most important appointment that elected members will undertake. Getting the right candidate is critical for the delivery of the Council's Business Plan and leadership of the organisational review. The Chief Executive has a crucial role in ensuring an effective working relationship between the elected members and senior officers and in providing strong leadership for staff.
13. Members will need to define the key skills, experience, behaviours and attributes required for this post. This will inform the job description and person specification and the approach to advertising and executive search. A draft Job Description and Person Specification is attached for comment at Appendix 1. Members should also consider the salary and package to be offered. It is recommended that advice and guidance is sought from the recruitment consultants in respect of market salary conditions.
14. The Committee should consider the following options:

### Internal Recruitment Process

This would consist of an internal advert and would be restricted to internal applicants only. There would be no cost for advertising.

Applicants will be required to apply using the Council's application process. A review of applications and shortlisting will take place. Shortlisted applicants will then undergo an assessment process and interview.

The Council could consider using an external recruitment consultant to assist and support the appointment panel during the selection stages. This would enable the use of psychometric tools and assessment (such as media skills, reasoning skills, and ability to make judgements on complex scenarios). A recruitment consultant could also support the appointment panel during interview and final decision making.

There would be a cost for using an external consultant and for the use of licenced psychometric tests and assessments.

### External Recruitment Process

This will consist of an externally focussed campaign which could include internal applications. Members will need to give consideration to the appointment of external recruitment consultants who will be engaged to support the Council through the process. Typically recruitment consultants can assist with:

- Advertising, development of a candidate pack and microsite
- Candidate management
- Executive Search
- Salary benchmarking and total package
- Longlist assessment
- Shortlist
- Assessment and Interview – support to the appointment panel

## Appointment

15. At the end of the process, and at the point of recommending the appointment at full Council, the members of the appointment panel must feel completely confident that the process of selection has provided them with the best and most fitting candidate, with the right attributes for the Council.
16. Members should ensure that the process is fair, robust and follows the Council's recruitment and equality and diversity policies. Candidates, for this level of appointment, will expect the highest standards with professional selection and interviewing processes. It is usual for candidates to expect extensive feedback following the process.
17. The Council will need to ensure that any decisions are evidenced and can be justified. Members involved in elements of the selection process, in particular interviews, will need to have refresher training on interview techniques.

## **Engagement of External Recruitment Consultants**

18. A number of agencies have been approached with a view to discussing initial proposals and indicative costs. A table is attached at Appendix 2.
19. Members should indicate the process they wish to take to select an external consultant which could include interview and presentation.
20. Procurement rules will apply and therefore work costed below £25,000 can be awarded following three quotes. Work costed above £25,000 would be subject to an Invitation to Tender process.

## **21. Implications**

### ***Staffing***

22. See paragraphs 7 and 11 above

### ***Financial***

23. A budget will need to be identified to cover the cost of a recruitment campaign and the use of external consultants to support Members with an executive search and the assessment of candidates. There are advantages of using external support in this way are that it provides an objective and independent assessment with additional information on candidates for Members to consider. External assessors will also provide candidates with feedback following their assessment. Costs are currently estimated at between £20 - £30 K, depending on the package of support being provided and the advertising costs.

### ***Legal***

24. The recommendations are in line with the Council's legislative requirements, pay policy, employment practices and are made in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance referred to above. In addition, under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has an obligation to appoint one of its officers to act as Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Returning Officer.

### ***Equality and Diversity***

25. None at present although see paragraphs 9 and 16 above in terms of equality during the recruitment process.

### **Background Papers**

26. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (S 4(1) (a))  
Representation of the People Act 1983 (S. 8(2) (a))  
Representation of the People Act 1982 (S. 35(1))  
Representation of the People Act 1983 (S. 8(2) (a))

**Report Author:** Susan Gardner-Craig – Head of People and Organisational Development

Telephone: (01954) 713285