

MANAGEMENT OF THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

1.0 The recruitment of a new chief executive is the most important appointment that elected members will undertake in terms of the paid service. Getting the right candidate is critical for the continued success of the organisation. The chief executive officer has a crucial role in ensuring an effective working relationship between the elected members and senior officers and in providing strong leadership for staff. 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 for the Council. Members will need to define what type of individual they are looking for, what skills they will have and how these will complement other members of SMT and, whether they will consider private and public sector candidates.

Members need to consider whether they want to:

- Share a Chief Executive with another local authority
- Make an interim appointment
- Appoint on a permanent or fixed term basis
- Review the whole structure of Senior Management Team

2.0 Chief executive recruitment processes can vary depending on the size and tier of the local authority and the preferences of elected members.

Options include:

- Internal advert and internally managed selection process only
- External advertising followed by internally managed selection process
- External advertising supported by external candidate assessment and internal final interviews
- External recruitment advisors appointed to support elected members with advertising, candidate management, assessment and interview panel support

Whichever process the members prefer, they should ensure that it is fair, robust and adheres to 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. The Council will need to ensure that any decisions are evidenced and can be justified.

3.0 Internal process

Members need to consider whether they wish to recruit from an internal pool only. If this is the preferred option, members will also need to consider the selection process that they wish to undertake; internal assessment of candidates; presentation; interview; tests; informal or formal lunch/evening event.

4.0 External advertising followed by internally managed selection process

Traditional adverts and the use of the internet can be effective mechanisms to attract candidates. The Council can utilise both its own website and the Jobs in Cambs portal to promote the vacancy and provide a source of information for candidates. The use of a specially designed microsite is also effective as it enables the Council to link all key documents and recruitment information to one web address.

In terms of advertising in the traditional media, there are a number of publications, such as the Local Government Chronical (LGC), Municipal Journal (MJ), which are specifically favoured for senior local government jobs. The Guardian is also widely used as it has a public sector jobs feature. Many paper publications also offer job postings on their own web sites for a small fee. We may be able to take advantage of advertorial space in either the LGC or MJ.

Indicative costs for advertising (preferential rates) are:

Full page colour - LGC £6000 Half page colour - LGC £4500 Half page mono - LGC £4500	Full page colour - MJ £9600 Half page mono - MJ £4500
Microsite design - £3,000 upwards depending on complexity	Advert creative work - £1500

The Council currently uses the county wide advertising contract with Tribal Resourcing for external adverts and is able to take advantage of discounted rates.

5.0 External advertising supported by external candidate assessment and internal final interviews

In addition the external support with advertising as set out in 4 above, members may wish to consider the use of external assessors to provide tests and assessment exercises. Costs will vary depending on what type of testing/assessment takes place. The 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 will be in the region of £15K - £20K plus advertising costs.

6.0 External recruitment consultants appointed to support elected members

There are several companies who will offer a full recruitment service (Tribal Resourcing, SOLACE Enterprises, Veredus, Gatenby Sanderson, Odgers Berndtson are among the better known companies).

All can provide a service which will include advertising, executive search, candidate management, initial candidate assessment (usually a 121 interview/discussion), production of a long list, assessment, short listing and interview support. Costs vary, but members could expect to pay between £30K - £50K depending on the level of service.

External advisors can support and coach the interview panellists, for example to prepare questions, illicit responses and develop themes/probing questions.

Considerations:

- the value of the contract/work – the Council’s procurement rules will need to be followed
- members must have a good working relationship with the external advisors

7.0 Other considerations

Interview panel – should comprise of elected members who must have received training in interview and selection. In accordance with SCDC policies, the panel must be gender balanced.

Confidentiality – It is critical that complete confidentiality is maintained during the process. Candidates may not want their current employer to know and in particular, internal candidates will not want colleagues to be aware. It will be seen as highly unprofessional and will reflect negatively on the Council if candidate details are discussed outside of the panel.

Candidate expenses

The Council's standard policy is not to pay interview expenses. However, Members may wish to consider a departure from policy for this post. The interview and selection process is likely to be held over two or more days and overnight accommodation and travel expenses will be incurred by the candidates.

Marketing the Council – this exercise is about marketing ourselves to prospective candidates. The process and the response that candidates receive will influence their decision to apply and, if offered, whether they accept the position. The advert, promotion material and documents, the process and 'aftercare' have to be professional but also welcoming and honest (we shouldn't brand ourselves as something that we are not). A 'Welcome' letter from the Leader is usual. The Leader, current job holder and other SCDC officers will also be expected hold informal discussions with prospective candidates.

Opportunities to meet a wider group of Members – There are informal and formal options.

- Members can be involved in assessment exercises as either observers or as participants (such as debates)
- Informal lunch 'Meet and Greet'
- Formal evening meal – would only be appropriate with a small number of candidates.
- Presentations to Members on particular key topics, for example to PFH's or working groups

Involvement of partners/other local authorities – in some cases local authorities have invited key partner organisations to participate in the process and provide feedback, for example LSP members, NHS or police representatives.

Use of external facilities – Members may wish to consider whether some or all of the selection and interview process is carried out at SCDC offices or whether they wish to use an external venue. Considerations may include room capacity at SCDC, confidentiality of the process (see above), room layout and location and the need to move candidates around the wider building.

External Factors:

- Current job market for this level of candidate? – indications are that there a 'healthy' number/calibre of candidates applying for this level of job.
- Are candidates interested in relocating? – indications are that the housing market is improving and more senior level candidates are prepared to relocate to secure top level jobs
- Are candidates remaining with their current employer pending restructuring opportunities? – indications are that there are more senior level candidates looking for opportunities now the uncertainty with unitary mergers has reduced.