



REPORT TO: Council
LEAD OFFICER: Employment and Staffing Committee

4 July 2019

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Purpose

1. To recommend to Council, the appointment of Liz Watts as Chief Executive Officer, Head of the Paid Service, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer and to all other roles, duties and delegations that are prescribed to the Chief Executive in the Council's Constitution for South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Recommendations and Reasons

2. The Employment and Staffing Committee which met to consider this matter on 2 July 2019 recommends that Council:
 - (a) Approve the appointment of Liz Watts as Chief Executive Officer and Head of Paid Service, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer and to all other roles, duties and delegations that are prescribed to the Chief Executive in the Council's Constitution for South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - (b) Notes that a provisional offer of employment has been made, subject to two exemplary references and eligibility checks in accordance with the Council's policies. The necessary references have been received.
 - (c) Agrees that the appointment commence on a date to be mutually agreed.
 - (d) Agrees that the salary to be offered is £129,930 which is within the Council's salary range for this post as set out in the Pay Policy Statement (£113,690 - £129,930 per annum).
 - (e) Confirms that the appointment will be subject to a 6-month probation period.

3. The above recommendations are made by Employment and Staffing Committee following:
 - a national recruitment campaign,
 - robust candidate assessment of experience, skills, capability and, organisational alignment
 - technical interview with Penna (Julie Towers) and LGA Chief Executive (Mark Lloyd)
 - psychometric/personal profile tests (Wave Professional Styles, Hogan Development Survey, Leadership Judgement Indicator)
 - assessment centre comprising three panels – Partners, Scrutiny, Staff
 - formal interview process carried out by the Appointments Panel.
4. The Appointments Panel were presented with detailed feedback at the end of each stage of the selection process. Candidate reports were provided to the Appointments Panel prior to the formal interviews.
5. At the end of the process Liz Watts demonstrated that she has the necessary experience, skills and strong leadership capability as well as clear alignment to the organisational priorities and values. Liz Watts proved to be the lead candidate in the technical assessment and received the highest scores from all three panels and interviews.
6. Employment and Staffing Committee unanimously recommend to Council that Liz Watts should be offered the post of Chief Executive. Details of her background and career history are attached as **Appendix A**.
7. In accordance with the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules and Regulations introduced under the Local Government Act 2000, all Members of the Cabinet have been informed of the Appointments Panel's recommendation.

The Leader has confirmed to the Interim Corporate Director and the Council's Legal Officer that the Cabinet has no objection to the proposed appointment.

Background

Appointment of Chief Executive Officer and Head of the Paid Service

8. Under the provisions of s4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council must have an officer designated as the Head of Paid Service and such appointment must be approved by full Council. This is one of three statutory roles; Head of the Paid Service, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. The roles of Head of the Paid Service and Monitoring Officer cannot be held, at the same time, by the same individual.
9. On the 25 April 2019, the Employment Committee gave consideration to the process of appointing a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.
10. It agreed to form an Appointments Panel consisting of:
 - Cllr Henry Batchelor
 - Cllr Sarah Cheung Johnson
 - Cllr Claire Daunton
 - Cllr Bridget Smith

- Cllr Peter Topping (Cllr Topping was not present at the meeting)
- Cllr John Williams

Cllr Henry Batchelor was elected as Chair of the Appointments Panel.

Due to work and other commitments, Cllr Topping was unavailable to participate in the assessment and selection process. All documents and candidate information were provided to Cllr Topping during the process.

11. The salary scale for the role of Chief Executive is £113,690 - £129,930 per annum. The Chief Executive receives the fees associated with the duties of Returning Officer. There is no other remuneration for this role. This is in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.
12. Following a procurement process, Penna were appointed to assist the Council during the recruitment process. Julie Towers from Penna plus a small team of Penna consultants provided assistance at all stages including advertising, executive search, initial long-list assessment, assessment centre and final interviews.
13. A process of executive search and a national advertising campaign produced an excellent response and 13 high quality applications were received. Long-listing and short-listing technical assessments produced a final shortlist of 3 candidates.
14. Candidates completed psychometric tests (Wave Professional Styles, Hogan Development Survey, Leadership Judgement Indicator).
15. On 21 June 2019 three shortlisted candidates went through a rigorous assessment process, this included three panel interviews with staff, partners and scrutiny members. On 1 July 2019 the 3 candidates attended formal interviews with the Appointments Panel.
16. The members of the Appointments Panel who participated in the assessment and selection process, having regard to assessment centre results, feedback from partner, scrutiny and staff panels, and taking account of the final interview scores, were unanimous in recommending that Liz Watts be offered the position of Chief Executive Officer.

Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer

17. All District Councils are required to appoint an officer of the Council to be Electoral Registration Officer for the purpose of the registration of Parliamentary and Local Government Electors (Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983). Council should note that the appointment of Deputy Returning Officer for County Council elections is made by the County Returning Officer and not by this Council.
18. All District Councils are required to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer for the election of District and Parish Councillors (Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983) and the Returning Officer for the purpose of Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
19. Council is requested to appoint Liz Watts as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer for this Council.

Considerations

20. The Chief Executive Officer as Head of the Paid Service is a key role in working with elected members and senior management to shape and deliver the Business Plan priorities for this Council.

Background Papers

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001

Relevant Employment Law

Report Author: Susan Gardner-Craig
Interim Corporate Director

Telephone: (01954) 713285