

## Chief Officer Appointments Committee

30 September 2020



### Recruitment to the Post of Chief Executive

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#### Report of Alison Lazazzera, Head of People and Talent Management

##### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider proposals for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive

##### Executive Summary

- 2 The Council's Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Terry Collins, has announced his intention to retire as he is 60 in November.
- 3 The Chief Officer Appointments Committee (COAC) is therefore required to consider arrangements for recruiting and appointing a new Chief Executive.
- 4 This report sets out a number of options for recruiting to the post as well as a proposed timeline for recruitment.

##### Recommendation(s)

- 5 It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Committee:
  - (a) agree to commence an internal recruitment exercise to appoint an interim Chief Executive as set out in paragraph 15 of the report
  - (b) agree the proposed method and timetable.

## **Background**

- 6 Under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council has a legal duty to appoint one officer as its Head of Paid Service.
- 7 The Council has designated the role of Head of Paid Service to the Chief Executive. The current Chief Executive has announced his intention to retire and therefore arrangements need to be made for the appointment of his successor.
- 8 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the appointment of the Chief Executive is the responsibility of COAC. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is also required to give the Cabinet notice of the proposed appointment, the particulars relevant to the appointment and allow a specified period for the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to raise any objection to the proposed appointment. Prior to any offer of appointment being made, the Council must approve the proposed appointment. A copy of the role profile and person specification are attached at Appendix 2.

## **Options for Recruitment**

### **Option 1 - External Recruitment**

- 9 It would be possible to hold an external recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive. However, the impact of Covid-19 is likely to have an impact on the number of applicants applying as well as the nature of the process due to social distancing requirements. An external recruitment process is likely to take at least three months to allow for advertising the role, longlisting, shortlisting and the interview process. The successful candidate (if he/she is external) is likely also to have to serve three months' notice with their existing employer. Consequently, it is likely to be at least 6 months before any new Chief Executive could commence their duties, which would be April 2021 at the earliest. This option would require an interim Chief Executive to be appointed either internally or externally to cover the interim period.

### **Option 2 - External Interim Appointment**

- 10 An alternative option would be to recruit an external interim to cover the period between the current Chief Executive retiring and until such time a substantive recruitment exercise is conducted.
- 11 There may be interim candidates available who may be interested in the role. However, it would take time for any interim to learn about the council and Durham County, during a period in which the organisation is still responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst dealing with the associated implications as well as the Council's continuing priorities.

### **Option 3 – Internal substantive appointment**

- 12 The Committee could decide to recruit to the substantive role internally from the Council's existing strong and effective Corporate Management Team. The benefit of choosing this option is that there would be certainty, continuity and minimum disruption to the organisation. It would be possible to work with an Executive Search Consultant to ensure that there is external validation of the recruitment process.
- 13 An internal recruitment process could commence in early October 2020 and be concluded relatively quickly. However, in recruiting to such a crucial role for the organisation, it would be good practice for the Council to test the market at the appropriate time to ensure that it appoints the most suitable candidate to the substantive role of Chief Executive.
- 14 An internal appointment would trigger a subsequent recruitment process to recruit to the successful candidate's substantive role.

### **Option 4 – Internal Interim Appointment (Recommended)**

- 15 Alternatively, the Council could make an internal appointment from within the Council's existing Corporate Management Team. This would provide continuity and minimum disruption to the organisation during the continued Covid-19 response and in the run up to the elections in May 2021.
- 16 If the Committee are minded to agree this option, it is suggested that the appointment is for a period of 12 months. That would enable the recruitment process for the substantive postholder to commence in June 2021 following the elections and when Covid is hoped to be more under control; and provide continued continuity in the interim if an external candidate is appointed and is required to serve a notice period.
- 17 This option would enable the Committee to consider the performance of an internal candidate in post and then against the wider market at the appropriate time.

### **Option 5 – Combine the role of Executive Director of Resources and Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service).**

- 18 Whilst this is an option that smaller councils have considered, it is not considered to be a sustainable solution for a council as large as Durham. Durham County Council is one of the largest councils in the country. Both positions have an extremely heavy workload and have distinct statutory duties.
- 19 The Committee will also note that the responsibilities of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships post were recently amalgamated into the Director of Resources role. The Chief Executive role needs to focus on key issues such as the economic growth of the county. Therefore, combining the positions is highly likely to limit the effectiveness of the postholder. The council has tried combining positions previously and on

both occasions capacity issues have been experienced. It is not considered as an appropriate option for a council of this size.

- 20 For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the recommended option for the Committee is option 4 on the basis that it will enable the Council to appoint a Chief Executive at the earliest opportunity to provide leadership and stability to the organisation during the continuing pandemic and in the run up to the election.

### **Recruitment Process**

- 21 Applications for roles at this level are commonly by way of submission of a CV and supporting statement. It is therefore proposed that the Corporate Management Team are invited to express an interest in the interim role by sending a CV and Supporting Statement to the Head of People and Talent Management.
- 22 Since this is an internal appointment and to ensure that a timely appointment is made, it is suggested that all members of CMT who express an interest in the role are invited to an interview with COAC. The Committee will be supported by the Chief Executive to provide technical advice/expertise in relation to the role.

### **Timeline for Internal Interim Recruitment Process**

- 23 The proposed timetable for the recommended recruitment process is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Recruitment Stage</b>
30 September 2020	COAC
1 - 9 October 2020	Expressions of Interest invited from CMT – CV & Supporting Statement
w/c 19 October 2020	COAC Interview
w/c 26 October 2020	Head of Legal & Democratic Services to give notice to the Executive of proposed Appointment
2 December 2020	Proposed appointment presented to Council for approval.

### **Proposed Recruitment Process / Interview**

- 24 Should the COAC agree to the proposals set out within this report, the CVs and supporting statements for any candidates will be supplied to

the COAC in advance of interviews, including a proposed schedule. Proposed questions will also be circulated for discussion and agreement on the day that the interviews will be held.

### **Recruitment to consequential vacancies**

- 25 An internal appointment will result in a Chief Officer vacancy within the Corporate Management Team. The Committee would also be responsible for appointing to such a vacancy.
- 26 In this scenario, it is recommended that COAC again recruit internally on an interim basis. If the successful candidate for the Chief Executive role is a statutory post holder, then a nominated Deputy could cover the statutory duties pending an interim appointment. It would then be for the relevant Corporate Director to consider whether there is a need for further appointments to backfill vacancies. This would not be a matter for COAC.
- 27 During the course of November, expressions of interest could be sought for the backfill for the relevant Chief Officer vacancy and subsequent interviews held with the COAC. This appointment would be subject to the appointment of any interim Chief Executive following approval by Full Council on 2 December.

### **Background papers**

- List any papers required by law / None

### **Other useful documents**

- Report to Council, Restructuring of the Corporate Management Team

### **Author(s)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The legislative requirements regarding the appointment of a Head of Paid Service and the Council's constitutional requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules are set out in the report. The recommended approach complies with these requirements.

### **Finance**

The recommended option is cost neutral to the County Council.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The recruitment process will be conducted fairly in accordance with the council's recruitment policy and procedures.

### **Climate Change**

Not applicable.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

The proposed approach ensures that the Council satisfies the requirement to designate an Officer as Head of Paid Service and ensures that there is continuity in leadership of the Council at a critical time.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

None

### **Procurement**

None

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## Appendix 2: Job Description and Person Specification

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# Chief Executive Officer

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** The Executive and Full Council

**RESPONSIBLE FOR:** The 'Paid Service'

**PURPOSE OF JOB:**

As the Head of Paid Service ensure the effective strategic leadership of the Council's Executive Management Team and be the Council's principal policy adviser to the Leader and Cabinet in order to support the delivery of excellent services and to ensure the Council's overall strategic objectives are met. This will be in accordance with the Council vision, Council policy, budgetary and statutory requirements.

To provide the overarching managerial framework to ensure effectiveness in service development and delivery and act as an advocate for the Council at local, regional and national levels.

**SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Undertake the role of principal policy Adviser to Elected Members, providing a clear sense of direction and purpose assisting them in the process of policy formulation, to ensure that the Council's vision, priorities and core values are made a reality.
2. Provide leadership and direction within the Authority to ensure the provision of high quality, cost effective services to the community, which incorporate 'Best Value' principles.
3. Ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to meet all governance requirements of the Authority as a statutory body.
4. Lead the Council's Corporate Management Team, providing clear strategic direction to secure a corporate and coordinated approach to service provision.
5. Ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Council's programmes and policies across all services and the effective deployment of the Authority's resources to those ends.
6. Determine and implement appropriate performance management processes to monitor and review the overall effectiveness of the Authority.
7. Manage the interface between Elected Members and Senior Officers, maintaining the essential Member/Officer partnerships and establishing appropriate Member/Officer processes.
8. Develop the Council's commitment to take a positive lead in major local and regional partnerships to achieve, within the overall strategy, maximum benefit for

the Authority and its communities.

9. Represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council at local, regional, national and international levels and with key stakeholders.
10. Ensure all plans and policies are communicated both internally and externally maximising the acceptance of them.
11. Scrutinise and advise on the plans and actions of Central Government and other external agencies to determine the impact on local policies and priorities.
12. To work closely with the local strategic partnership and the family of partnerships and ensure the Council achieves maximum benefit from partnership working.
13. Ensure both the effective coordination of, and contribution towards, bids and resources to promote the sustainable regeneration of the local economy and respond to the needs of the community.
14. Maintain a constant review of the organisation and administration of the Authority, making recommendations to the Council where major changes are required in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
15. To develop and promote a learning culture that encourages the use of initiative, individual and team responsibility, ownership, open communication and positive contribution to the organisation and its partners.
16. Provide strong visible leadership and direction to the Council's workforce and partners to deliver Council and community priorities, maximising potential and performance to produce excellent outcomes.
17. Ensure equality and inclusion within the Authority and across all service provision, ensuring the diverse needs of all service users are recognised and met.
18. Promote, develop and maintain good relationships with the media and public and ensure an effective communication strategy both internal and external to the organisation.
19. Directly manage the Corporate Directors.
20. Comply with Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and maintain spending within approved levels.
21. All duties and responsibilities should be carried out in accordance with Council policies and procedures, in particular those on equality and diversity, health and safety and environmental sustainability.
22. To undertake any other related duties and responsibilities as they arise.



# Chief Executive Officer

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Part One

**Qualification:** Educated to Degree Level and / or relevant Professional Qualification'

### Part Two

#### Experience

- 1 Successful and consistent achievement at a Chief Executive level or substantial senior management experience in an organisation of comparable size, scope and complexity, including managing large budgets and resources.
- 2 A proven track record of successful corporate management including managing change initiatives in addition to leading the formulation and delivery of corporate vision, strategies, policies and objectives.
- 3 A successful track record of building productive internal and external relationships and working across organisational and sector boundaries that embraces collaborative working with the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.
- 4 Influential and able to provide sound professional advice and guidance at senior management/director/elected member/board member level with significant experience of operating at Board level.
- 5 A proven track record of effective decision making within a complex political/partnership environment including political acumen and skills to develop productive working relationships with elected members that command respect, trust and confidence.
- 6 A demonstrable track record of successfully designing, leading and implementing high-impact organisational and cultural change in a manner that inspires, motivates and engages all employees.
- 7 A demonstrable record of establishing a strong performance culture, inspiring, motivating and empowering people to meet corporate objectives and deliver services that are responsive, customer-focused and achieve results.
- 8 Extensive experience of successful people, budgetary, legal and resource management within a large complex, multi-functional organisation and commissioning environment.
- 9 Experience of building personal and professional credibility with boards, management teams, employees, partners, the public and the media. Evidence of success in building and enhancing the reputation of an organisation; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 10 Evidence of personal leadership in achieving equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery. Demonstrable evidence of linking diversity issues to policy and service development and delivery. Evidence of success in promoting equal opportunities and delivering best value through innovation and

integrated customer and community focused service provision, recognising and celebrating the diversity of the community and the workforce.

- 11 Excellent communication and networking skills, with the ability to give articulate, comprehensive and persuasive presentations to a wide variety of audiences, including the media, on controversial and/or complex matters.
- 12 Proven ability to organise and undertake a diverse workload, manage constant and often conflicting work demands whilst still achieving competing deadlines and targets.
- 13 Have strategic vision and planning skills and experience with the ability to set challenging objectives and targets and the determination and influencing skills to secure their achievement.

## **Part Three**

### **Knowledge, skills and abilities**

1. A comprehensive understanding of local government and the wider health and social care economy, the national and political context within which they operate and the current challenges and opportunities facing a largely deprived area.
2. Well developed leadership skills that empower and encourage commitment from others and promote a positive and motivated organisational culture.
3. An ability to operate sensitively within a political environment and to develop relationships with all stakeholders that command respect, trust and confidence.
4. An ability to act with creative entrepreneurial flair whilst maintaining a clear overview of issues affecting the Council and manage competing priorities within financial constraints.
5. An ability to make difficult decisions in a challenging environment and to manage conflict and resistance positively.
6. Excellent communication and negotiation skills and an ability to influence outcomes through tact, diplomacy and effective reasoning and persuasion, together with the ability to write and present reports on complex issues.
7. An ability to relate to and win the confidence and trust of members, employees, partners and the consumers/client groups/the public.
8. An ability to develop and implement corporate strategies in pursuit of agreed goals.
9. Financial and commercial awareness, with strong analytical skills and a creative approach to problem solving.

10. An ability to provide clear, timely, appropriate, balanced and unambiguous advice.
11. An ability to manage corporate and individual performance in a manner that raises standards and delivers results as well as being evidence based, outcome focused and linked clearly to the Council's strategic aims.

## **Part Four**

### **Personal Qualities**

1. Ambition, energy, drive and resilience: An ability to deliver under pressure.
2. An empowering style, valuing the contributions of others and committed to employee development.
3. A strong commitment to service excellence, customer supremacy and continuous improvement.
4. Results focussed and performance driven.
5. Leads from the front, an honest and straightforward style that gains the respect of others.
6. A commitment to local democracy, social justice, equality of opportunity and accountability to the community.
7. Personal conduct, integrity and credibility that commands the confidence and respect of members, managers, staff, local communities, external partners and stakeholders.
8. An innovative mindset, with the ability to think beyond traditional ways of doing things and make changes happen.