

Extraordinary County Council

16 December 2020

Appointment of Interim Chief Executive



Report of Chief Officer Appointments Committee

Councillor Simon Henig, Chairman of the Chief Officer Appointments Committee

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is:
 - (a) to inform Council of the recruitment process for an Interim Chief Executive;
 - (b) to seek Council approval as to the recommended appointment to the post.

Executive Summary

- 2 In September 2020, Terry Collins, Chief Executive, announced his intention to retire at the end of December 2020. The Chief Officer Appointment's Committee (COAC) met on 30 September 2020 to consider proposals for recruiting a new Interim Chief Executive and on 23 October 2020 interviewed candidates for an interim appointment.
- 3 This report summarises the considerations of the COAC and makes a recommendation as to the appointment of Interim Chief Executive.

Recommendation(s)

- 5 It is recommended that Full Council:
 - (a) appoints John Hewitt as the Interim Chief Executive Officer effective from 1 January 2021.

Background

- 6 Following the announcement of Terry Collins' intention to retire as the Council's Chief Executive, the COAC met on 30 September 2020 to implement plans regarding the appointment of his successor. The COAC considered the following options for recruitment to the role:
 - (a) External substantive recruitment;
 - (b) External interim appointment;
 - (c) Internal substantive appointment;
 - (d) Internal interim appointment;
 - (e) Combine the role of Executive Director of Resources and Chief Executive.
- 7 Given the importance of a seamless and rapid transition from the current Chief Executive to any successor and the current challenges the Council are facing relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for stability in the short term, COAC agreed that an internal interim appointment (option d) was the most appropriate course of action. The COAC agreed to advertise the post internally in the first instance, drawing candidates from the Corporate Management Team.
- 8 This option was considered the most suitable in the circumstances as it would 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.
- 9 The internal appointment would be for a period of 12 months, which would enable the recruitment process to fill the post permanently commencing in June 2021 following council elections.
- 10 This would also enable the Chief Officer Appointments Committee to consider the performance of an internal candidate in post and then against the wider market at the appropriate time.

Appointment Process

- 11 Expressions of interest were therefore invited from members of the Corporate Management Team. Two expressions of interest were received and both candidates were interviewed by the COAC on 23 October 2020. The process included a range of technical questions in addition to a presentation.

- 12 On completion of the interviews, the COAC considered each candidate's overall performance and as a result, were able to identify the preferred candidate as John Hewitt, the current postholder as the Corporate Director of Resources.
- 13 The COAC therefore resolved that John Hewitt be offered the Interim Chief Executive Officer post for a period of 12 months, subject to paragraph 3.5 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and the confirmation of the Council in accordance with Article 4.02(h) of the Constitution.

Interim Appointment

- 13 Paragraph 3.5 of Officer Employment Procedure Rules requires the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (as Proper Officer) to notify the Cabinet (referred to in the rules as the Executive) of the intention to appoint John Hewitt and the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made.
- 14 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services notified the Cabinet of the intended appointment on 3 November 2020 and requested that any objections be provided by 10 November 2020. No objections were received.
- 15 Terry Collins has outstanding annual leave remaining therefore his last day at the Council is anticipated to be 2 December 2020. Subject to Full Council approval, it is proposed that John Hewitt will act up as Chief Executive from 3 December, prior to his appointment commencing on 1 January 2021, for a period of 12 months.
- 16 The COAC agreed that the interim arrangement would be reviewed in advance of the end of the 12-month period of cover in order that decisions can be taken in relation to the permanent appointment of Chief Executive.

Interim Corporate Director of Resources

- 17 Subject to approval by Council of the recommended appointment of the Interim Chief Executive, the backfill appointment of an Interim Corporate Director of Resources is also a matter for the COAC.
- 18 On 13 November 2020, the COAC invited expressions of interest from members of the Resources Management Team who meet the criteria for the role. Interviews for this role will be held on 4 December 2020.

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The appointment complies with HR policies and procedures in addition to the requirements as set out within the Constitution relating to the appointment to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

Finance

The salary for the post remains unchanged as set out within the Pay Policy for the Council. There are no other financial implications.

Consultation

NA

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The appointment process is compliant with equalities legislation.

Climate Change

NA

Human Rights

There are no human rights issues.

Crime and Disorder

NA

Staffing

The staffing implication arising from the appointment are set out in the report.

Accommodation

NA

Risk

The proposals set out within the report mitigate against any risks of not filling the post of Chief Executive.

Procurement

NA