

## Chief Officer Appointments Committee

10 September 2021



### Recruitment to the Post of Corporate Director of Resources

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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 to the post of Corporate Director of Resources on a permanent basis.

##### Executive Summary

- 2 Following the announcement of the former Chief Executive's (Terry Collins) retirement in December 2020, the Chief Officer Appointments Committee (COAC) on 23 October considered options for the filling of the post of Chief Executive and subsequently Corporate Director of Resources on an interim basis.
- 3 The existing Corporate Director of Resources was appointed to the role of interim Chief Executive. Consequently, the Committee considered how to backfill to the subsequent vacant post. After an internal recruitment process, Paul Darby was appointed as Interim Corporate Director of Resources.
- 4 The Committee have subsequently conducted a recruitment exercise and offered the role of Chief Executive to John Hewitt on a permanent basis subject to approval by full Council in September 2021. The Committee is therefore required to consider arrangements for recruiting to the Corporate Director of Resources role on a permanent basis.
- 5 This report sets out the options for the COAC to consider in terms of recruiting to the permanent post of Corporate Director of Resources.

##### Recommendation(s)

- 6 It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Committee:
  - (a) note the background to the interim arrangements and current position;

- (b) consider the options set out within the report for appointing to the permanent post of Corporate Director of Resources;
- (c) determine the preferred option for recruiting to the post of Corporate Director of Resources.

## **Background**

- 7 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. The Council has designated the role of Head of Paid Service to the Chief Executive.
- 8 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the recruitment of the Chief Executive and other Chief Officers is the responsibility of COAC. COAC considered a report setting out a number of options for recruitment to the permanent post of Chief Executive and following interviews in July 2021, John Hewitt has been offered the post, subject to approval by Full Council on 22 September 2021.
- 9 Subject to the outcome of Council in September, John Hewitt's appointment as Chief Executive means that his previous role as Corporate Director of Resources becomes vacant. It has been filled on an interim basis following a recommendation from COAC to Council on 2 December 2020.
- 9 The options for the COAC to consider in relation to appointing to the permanent post of Corporate Director of Resources are set out below. It is anticipated that the recruitment process will commence immediately after the Council meeting and confirmation of the Chief Executive's appointment.
- 10 The salary for the Director of Resources post is £152,669. This is the salary for all Corporate Director posts and is part of the senior pay and grading structure and is set out in the Pay Policy for the Council.

## **Options for consideration**

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

- 11 In considering filling the post of Corporate Director of Resources permanently, an external recruitment process could be commenced. An external recruitment process is likely to take at least three months to allow for advertising the role, longlisting, shortlisting and the interview process itself. The successful candidate (if he/she is an external appointment) is likely also to have to serve at least three months' notice with their existing employer. Consequently, it is likely to be at least 6 months before any new Director of Resources could commence their duties.
- 12 This option provides the advantage of testing the market for a post of this seniority but results in a longer process, depending upon the preferred candidate selected, and also has the disadvantage of potentially more change and uncertainty. The post has been covered on an interim basis by Paul Darby. Should Mr Darby not be the successful candidate, continued interim cover would need to continue until an external appointee could commence in post.

- 13 For posts at this level, the Council has previously engaged a Specialist Executive Search / Recruitment Company to support with the recruitment process in addition to undertaking a search of potential candidates. This is not a mandatory requirement however and there are other options for COAC to consider. The costs of undertaking an external recruitment exercise for a post of this nature, including national advertising and the services of a recruitment consultant / undertaking of a search are circa £27,000 plus advertising costs. The costs could be higher depending on use of technical specialists in the process.
- 14 Should the COAC wish to undertake external recruitment, it will need to decide whether to engage the use of a Specialist Recruitment Agency to support the whole process including an executive search or to run the process using advertising through the council's HR team. Alternatively, the COAC may wish to use a Specialist Recruitment Agency for part of the process, such as building of a microsite for the post.

## **Option 2 – Internal Recruitment**

- 15 The Committee could decide to recruit to the substantive role internally, with an internal advert. This may result in the COAC appointing the existing interim Director of Resources, subject to the COAC being satisfied of the performance of the individual to date, their experience and skills and subject to a formal application / interview for the permanent role. This would send a strong message to the organisation in terms of career progression / succession planning and opportunities for development within the council and would be a lower cost option.
- 16 The advantages are that an internal recruitment process could commence and be concluded relatively quickly, providing continuity and stability should the interim post holder be successful. Other authorities in our region have adopted a similar approach to the appointment of similar roles at this level (most recently North Tyneside MBC, Darlington BC, and Stockton BC) – mainly for reasons of continuity and where their members felt there was a suitable candidate internally with the requisite skills and experience. However, an internal recruitment process means that the Council is unable to test the market.

## **Option 3 - Extend the Interim Contract**

- 17 The COAC could consider extending the current interim arrangement and reviewing the position again in 6 months. The Committee could extend the interim position for a period of a further 6 months, up to June 2022, with a review in December 2021.
- 18 The advantages of this would be an element of continuity and further time to assess the suitability of the interim candidate. The disadvantage of this approach are the continued interim arrangements which would need to continue with the Corporate Director of Resources role and other subsequent temporary arrangements which are in place at Head of Service levels.

## **Background papers**

- List any papers required by law / None

## **Other useful documents**

### **Author(s)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The requirements regarding the appointment of Chief Officers are set out in the Constitution and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. The proposals set out within the report comply with these rules.

### **Finance**

In terms of recruiting to permanent position of Director of Resources, the assumption has been made that the salary remains the same and therefore in that respect it cost neutral to the County Council. The current salary of the Director of Resources post is £152,669

The costs of undertaking an external recruitment exercise for a post of this nature, based on previous experience of recruitment to Chief Officer positions and including national advertising and the services of a recruitment consultant are circa £27,000.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

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

Any recruitment process needs to 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**

Any of the options outlined in this report will ensure that the Council satisfies the requirement to designate an Officer Section 151 Officer. The current interim arrangements do cause an element of uncertainty within the senior leadership team and across the workforce more widely and it is preferable to move to a more permanent appointment as soon as is practicable.

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

## **Risk**

Depending on which recruitment option is chosen risks arise from the length of time to move to a permanent appointment and the continuation of the current interim arrangements.

## **Procurement**

Should the COAC wish to undertake an external recruitment exercise and engage the services of a recruitment consultant a procurement exercise would need to be undertaken to appoint that consultant.

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## Appendix 2: Job Description and Person Specification

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### Job Description Corporate Director of Resources

<b>Job Title:</b>	Corporate Director
<b>Directorate:</b>	Resources
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Direct Reports:</b>	Heads of Service within Service Area, plus Strategic Manager for Internal Audit, Risk and Corporate Fraud
<b>Job Purpose:</b>	To take a corporate role in supporting the Chief Executive, the Leader and the Cabinet to achieve the Council's vision for the residents and communities of County Durham. Take the lead role on the innovation, development and delivery of services within the Directorate.

#### **Corporate Responsibilities:**

Member of the Corporate Management Team developing a strong corporate approach to all aspects of Council business. Ensuring all Council assets, skills, resources, influence and intelligence are collectively focused to maximise impact on priority policy areas. Undertake the statutory role of Section 151 Officer for the Council.

#### **Key Corporate Tasks - Shared accountability with the Chief Executive and other Directors to:**

- Develop, deliver and achieve strategic priorities, objectives, values and long-term vision for the Council
- Provide advice and support to Councillors
- Develop and maintain a one organisation ethos with demonstrable commitment to corporate culture
- Manage overall performance of the Council
- Ensure a corporate approach which provides visible and effective leadership which focuses on outcomes for customers and the community
- Develop the Council's wider leadership role and delivery of effective partnership working
- Lead on major cross-cutting theme(s) and/or whole council 'champion' for a geographical area
- Ensure implementation of corporate policy covering the control of Health and Safety risks
- Fulfil the duties of the 151 Officer role

## **Directorate Responsibilities:**

The provision of all services within County Durham related to:

- Corporate Finance and Commercial Services
- People and Talent Management
- Finance and Transactional Services
- Legal & Democratic Services Digital and Customer Services
- Transformation
- Strategy
- Internal Audit, Risk and Corporate Fraud
- \*Shared responsibility for COVID-19 Recovery: Health, Welfare & Community

## **Key Directorate Tasks:**

- Lead on the development and strategy and policy
- Lead on development and delivery of a resident focused and outcome-based approach, including the establishment of consultation frameworks and the development of services taking account of residents and business feedback.
- Drive service excellence and sound financial management promoting a culture of value for money, innovation, performance management and empowerment amongst individuals and teams to ensure continuous improvement.
- Represent the Council at local, regional and national forums, and take the lead role in developing regional partnerships with the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Ensure required responses are made to national agenda and legislation.
- Undertake any relevant statutory duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Council associated with the role.
- Ensure provision of advice and guidance to the Chief Executive, the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required.
- Ensure the principles of equality and diversity and the Council's other corporate values are embraced and underpin all work for employees and service users.
- Accountable for the effective management and deployment of all resources
- Build capacity and develop skills to enable the Council to deliver on its priorities and ambitions;
- Ensure that effective and efficient Health, Safety and Welfare systems are in place.
- Undertake the statutory Section 73 for the North East Combined Authority, providing effective and impartial advice to NECA and the Joint Transport Committee

**All Corporate and Directorate tasks to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's competency framework**

## Person Specification

**Job Title:** Corporate Director of Resources

### Qualifications

- Degree level or equivalent standard of general education.
- Relevant professional accountancy qualification.

### Personal Attributes

- A team focussed approach, commitment to achieving value for money, service excellence and equality in employment and service delivery.
- Commitment to community involvement and participation in the development and delivery of Council strategies and services.

### Experience - Corporate

- Consistent and demonstrable achievement at a senior management level in a large, high performing, complex organisation.
- Experience of successful strategic management and a proven track record of leading in the formulation and delivery of strategic objectives and policies.
- A demonstrable track record of leading, motivating and managing multi-disciplinary teams to achieve significant, sustainable service improvements and outstanding results
- Experience of working with partner and stakeholders to deliver outcome focussed services.
- Experience of success in the initiation and management of change within a large and complex organisation.
- A proven track record of leading and managing complex and diverse services, demonstrating strong financial management and the management of diverse staff groups
- Evidence of establishing a performance management culture, including service planning, target setting, performance appraisal.
- A record of managing substantial strategic budgets, with an emphasis on promoting cost-efficiencies and value for money.
- A track record of working with and forging successful partnerships with a wide range of internal and external bodies to successfully deliver cross sector projects.

### Experience - Role Specific

- Experience of achievement in a High Performing Local Authority across a range of service areas
- Experience of leading multi - functional teams to deliver a range of front line and support services
- Experience of working corporately and across teams to deliver wider outcomes
- Experience of working with local, regional and national stakeholders to deliver services and to influence the change agenda
- Evidence of Strategic Financial Management and medium-term financial planning

- Clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the S151 officer and preferably, direct experience of this role.
- Experience of the role and function of internal and external audit in local government
- Evidence of working within a political organisation and ability to work effectively with politicians from all political groups
- Experience of developing a commercial approach to support local regeneration initiatives
- Awareness and understanding/ experience of strategic human resource management and leading wider cultural change
- Experience of transforming services to focus on outcomes and to provide services that provide value for money and demonstrate efficient and effective use of resources
- Experience of performance management and the application of performance management principles to help to improve the councils and partners performance

### **Knowledge and Skills**

- Ability to convey clear vision and manage strategically within a corporate context.
- Ability to initiative and implement creative and imaginative approaches that are outcome focused
- Demonstrate leadership skills and ability to empower, motivate and develop staff, creating a positive inclusive organisational culture and value diversity.
- Highly developed networking, advocacy, written, oral and presentation skills to relate effectively to employees, service managers, Councillors, the general public and other stakeholders and to commend their respect, trust and confidence,
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Section 73 officer
- Understanding the council's legal framework and the responsibilities of the monitoring officer
- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the relevant service legislation, best practice and current issues.
- Ability to convey complex information to senior leaders, politicians and the wider workforce in a way that is meaningful and that assists decision making