



Report of Chief Officer Appointments Committee

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To outline for the County Council the recruitment arrangements which were made for the purpose of recruiting to the post of Chief Executive Officer and to make a recommendation in relation to the permanent appointment following the completion of the recruitment process.

Executive Summary

- 2 As a result of the announcement by the former Chief Executive, Terry Collins of his intention to retire in December 2020, the Chief Officer Appointments Committee (COAC) considered a report on 30 September 2020 relating to the options for appointing to the role of Chief Executive.
- 3 The COAC considered a number of options and agreed to fill the post on an interim basis for a period of 12 months using an internal recruitment exercise, inviting expressions of interest from the Corporate Management Team. As a result of this John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources, was appointed to the interim role.
- 4 The COAC considered a further report on 13 July 2021 setting out the options for recruitment to the permanent post of Chief Executive. This resulted in an advertisement being placed on the North East Jobs Portal, restricted to Durham County Council employees for which one application from John Hewitt was received and considered by the COAC at interview on 29 July 2021.
- 5 Following the performance at interview, the COAC concluded to offer John Hewitt the permanent post of Chief Executive, subject to Full Council approval on 22 September 2021.

Recommendation(s)

- 6 The COAC recommends that John Hewitt be appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer with immediate effect.

Background

- 7 Terry Collins, the previous Chief Executive indicated in September 2020 that it was his intention to retire in December 2020. In line with due process, he subsequently submitted his resignation as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- 8 It was therefore necessary for the Council to implement plans in relation to the appointment of a successor and a report was considered by the COAC on 30 September 2020 which set out a number of options including filling the post on an interim, internal basis, which was the preferred option selected by the COAC.
- 9 This option was considered as the most appropriate as it would ensure continued stability within the organisation at a time when the organisation was in the response phase of the COVID pandemic. The interim post was subsequently advertised at the existing salary, with no changes to the role profile, internally for applications from the Corporate Management Team and two applications were received, with both candidates being interviewed
- 10 On completion of the interviews, the COAC concluded that John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources, be appointed as Interim Chief Executive for a period of 12 months, with a review in advance of this period. The interim appointment was then subsequently approved by Full Council on 16 December 2020.
- 11 On 13 July 2021, the COAC then received a report setting out the options for recruiting to the permanent post of Chief Executive and having considered all the options, concluded that the post was to be advertised internally.
- 12 An advert was placed on the North East Jobs Portal and one application was received from John Hewitt, Interim Chief Executive, who was subsequently interviewed by the COAC on 29 July 2021.
- 13 Following the performance at interview, the COAC concluded to offer the permanent post of Chief Executive, subject to Full Council approval to John Hewitt.
- 14 As required by the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave notice of the COACs decision to the Cabinet on the 29 July 2021 and no objections were received.

Author(s)

Allison Lazazzera

Tel: 03000 264473

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Rule 3.4 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules states that the County Council must approve any appointment to the post of Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service pursuant to s4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Finance

The funding for the post is in place therefore there are no finance implications arising from this appointment.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The appointment process complied with Equalities Legislation.

Climate Change

N/A.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

The recruitment and appointment to the post of Chief Executive is undertaken via the COAC. Appointments are subject to the approval of Full Council.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None