

Durham County Council

At a meeting of the **Chief Officer Appointments Committee** held in **Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 13 December 2024** at **12 noon**.

Present:

Councillor A Hopgood (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors R Bell (Vice-Chair), R Adcock-Forster, R Crute, L Hovvells, D Oliver, E Scott, C Hood (substitute for J Shuttleworth) and S Zair (substitute for A Shield)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A Shield and J Shuttleworth.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor C Hood for Cllr J Shuttleworth and Councillor S Zair for Councillor A Shield.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

5 Recruitment to the Post of Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding proposals to amend the current role profile of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth and to seek approval to commence an external recruitment exercise to fill the post following the resignation of the current post holder who would be leaving the authority on 26 January to take up a new post as Chief Executive of the East Midlands Combined Authority (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the process would present an opportunity to review the role profile and realign two specific areas with synergies in council. These were outlined in paragraph 11 of the report and would see the Head of Transport and Contract Services re-aligned to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change; the Head of Corporate Property and Land be re-aligned to the Corporate Director of Resources with a remaining Head of Service to be aligned under the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the newly established Devolution arrangements were not in place when the Corporate Director's post was last advertised. During this period, and to provide the necessary corporate oversight during the transition until the appointment of a new Corporate Director, it was being proposed that the Head of Planning and Housing would report temporarily to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and the Head of Culture, Tourism and Sport would report temporarily to the Chief Executive, given the links to the Leaders devolution portfolio for the North East Combined Authority.

Councillor A Hopgood highlighted that when the post was last advertised the North East Combined Authority (NECA) did not exist. It was important to consider the capacity within the post given that everything that came through NECA was essentially linked to this Corporate Directors' remit. Councillor Hopgood also felt that it was an opportune time to link Highways elements, all in one place and Assets to Resources.

Councillor R Bell commented that recent planning announcements made by the Government suggested that Planning would change markedly as would the role of Council over time.

Councillor R Crute echoed the comments of Councillor Bell and said it was vital that any potential candidate had the relevant experience, adding that the review of County Durham Plan would also take place next year.

The Head of HR and Organisation Development advised that the advert would likely go out first week in January.

Resolved

That the recommendations in the report be agreed.