



Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Lesley Bennett

Email: Lesley.Bennett@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622613

Date: 27 November 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **STAFF AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, MORPETH** on **TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2023** at **1.30 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

To Staff and Appointments Committee members as follows:-

G Sanderson (Chair), R Wearmouth (Vice-Chair), A Dale, S Dickinson, B Flux, I Hunter, M Purvis, E Simpson and J Watson



Dr Helen Paterson, Chief Executive
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AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 4)

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 25 October 2023, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a) Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b) Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c) Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d) Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e) Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring

Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER (Pages 5 - 10)

The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee the outcome of the selection process for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and to seek approval for the appointment of the preferred candidate. Attached to this report is a confidential (part 2) exempt Appendix 1 setting out the application of the preferred candidate.

5. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER (ACFO) (Pages 11 - 16)

This report sets out the proposed appointment process for the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) within Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service. The current postholder has been successful in their application and subject to StAC approval on 5th December 2023 will be appointed to Deputy Chief Fire Officer, therefore, the ACFO post will become vacant from 11th December 2023. This report aims to set out the proposed process to appoint a permanent replacement.

This report also seeks approval that at the conclusion to the selection process, the preferred candidate will be notified of their conditional appointment, subject to the approval of Staff and Appointments Committee.

6. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER - HEAD OF OD AND CULTURE (Pages 17 - 22)

The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee a course of action taken in response to the unexpected withdrawal of the preferred candidate for the Head of OD and Culture and the sourcing and approval of an alternative preferred candidate. Attached to this report is a confidential (part 2) exempt appendix setting out the application of the preferred candidate.

7. REDEFINITION AND RENAMING OF ROLE CURRENTLY KNOWN AS DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS (Pages 23 - 38)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval that the role of the current Director of Strategy and Communications be redefined in terms of role content and that the job title be changed to 'Assistant Chief Executive.

8. PROBATIONARY PERIOD COMPLETION - CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER)

(Pages 39 - 88)

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the status of probationary assessments for the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Director of Law and Corporate Governance of the Council.

9. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

To consider such other urgent business as, in the opinion of the Chair, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting date will be 24 January 2024, at 10.00 pm at County Hall, Morpeth.

PART II

It is expected that matters included in this part of the Agenda will be dealt with in private. Reports referred to are enclosed for members and officers only, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication".

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee is invited to consider passing the following resolution:

- (a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Items	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
4 & 6	1 and 2 Information relating to any individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
AND	The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because

- 12. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER** (Pages 89 - 98)
- To consider the attached Appendix 1 under Agenda item 4 in Part 1 of this agenda.
- 13. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER - HEAD OF OD AND CULTURE** (Pages 99 - 106)
- To consider the attached Appendix 1 under Agenda item 6 in Part 1 of this agenda.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied
9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — a. under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and b. which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)—

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the landlord is the council; and b. the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and b. either— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* ‘director’ includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* ‘securities’ means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a. any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b. any body
 - i. exercising functions of a public nature
 - ii. any body directed to charitable purposes or
 - iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STAFF AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Staff and Appointments Committee** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth on Wednesday, 25 October 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G. Sanderson
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Flux, B.	Simpson, E
Hunter, I.	Watson, J.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bennett, L.M.	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Gerrard, S.	Director of Law and Corporate Governance (MO)
Paterson, H.	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services
Sample, C.	Lawyer
Stewart, F.	Lawyer

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors A. Dale, S. Dickinson, M. Purvis and R. Wearmouth.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 September 2023, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

19. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER – HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Chief Executive presented the report which confirmed and set out the outcome of a selection process for the Head of Policy and Performance and sought approval for the appointment of the preferred candidate.

RESOLVED

Ch.'s Initials.....

- (1) to accept the findings of the selection panel that the preferred candidate be appointed to the role of Head of Communications and Engagement. Details are set out in the attached confidential appendix 1.
- (2) to agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader and/or Cabinet that the appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- (3) To note that the offer of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- (4) To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is to be confirmed following all the necessary pre-employment checks.
- (5) To agree that the Head of Communications and Engagement receives staff benefits in line with all Council employees and remuneration of £73,511 per annum within pay band 14 (this cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions)

Stephen Gerrard, Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

20. DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (MONITORING OFFICER) – CONTRACTURAL CHANGE

The Chief Executive presented the report seeking approval that the current postholder in the role of Director Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer) be contracted on a permanent basis. It was confirmed that all other terms and conditions of employment, including salary, would remain unchanged.

RESOLVED

- (1) To approve that the current postholder be offered a permanent contract in the role of Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer).
- (2) Subject to the approval of this committee, to recommend to full Council on 1 November 2023 that the offer of a permanent contract be made.
- (3) To agree that, subject to approval of recommendation 2.1 above, and approval by full Council on 1 November 2023, permanent contractual status be offered from 2 November 2023.

Stephen Gerrard, Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer) returned to the meeting.

21. CHANGE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The Director of Workforce and Organisational Development presented the report seeking agreement to start a consultation to change the terms and conditions of service covering staff occupying the roles of Director and Executive Director in the Council, all of whom were classed as Chief or Deputy Chief Officers.

It was confirmed that there were no payroll implications other than that the new terms and conditions were subject to an, as yet, undetermined pay award.

RESOLVED

- (1) To note the proposal from Executive Management Team that the identified group of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers at Director level and above, be accordingly assigned to JNC Chief Officer terms and conditions.
- (2) To approve formal consultation of the affected staff to propose to change their terms and conditions.
- (3) To agree that, subject to there being no significant issues raised during consultation, once consultation has concluded, those staff will be assigned to JNC Chief Officer terms and conditions with an effective date of 1 April 2024. Updated statements of particulars will be issued accordingly.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 5 December 2023, at 1.30 pm in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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Northumberland County Council

Staff & Appointments Committee

5th December 2023

Appointment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Report of Responsible Officer : Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

- 1.1 This report is relevant to all areas of the Corporate Plan as it relates to ensuring that the Council is compliant with the constitution and is fulfilling its legal duties and requirements to ensure that there is an effective and fit for purpose staffing establishment.

2. Purpose of report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee the outcome of the selection process for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and to seek approval for the appointment of the preferred candidate. Attached to this report is a confidential (part 2) exempt Appendix 1 setting out the application of the preferred candidate.
- 2.2 The Committee will recall at its meeting on 30th August 2023, that arrangements for the permanent recruitment to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer role was agreed.
- 2.3 This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment (or dismissal) of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Accordingly, please note that the appointments referred to in this report are subject to no substantial and well-founded objections being notified to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Part 4.3 of the Constitution (Officer Employment Procedure Rules).

3. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 3.1 To accept the findings of the selection panel that the preferred candidate be appointed to the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Details are set out in the attached confidential appendix 1.

- 3.2 To agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader and/or Cabinet that the appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- 3.3 To note that offers of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 3.4 To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is to be confirmed following all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 3.5 To agree that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer will align to the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services terms and conditions (Gold Book) with remuneration aligning to NCC pay grade of Band 17, £126,665 SCP 70. This cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions.

4. Background

- 4.1 At the meeting of the Staff and Appointments Committee on 30th August 2023 the appointment process for the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer was agreed. Also agreed was the Job Description (and salary scale point), the indicative timetable for the recruitment process and the selection methodology.
- 4.2 The assessment and selection process for the single shortlisted candidate involved the following:
 - 4.2.1 Psychometric assessment using Lumina Spark, with full outcome report presented to interview panel.
 - 4.2.2 A staff panel question and answer session with 6 employees from Northumberland Fire and Rescue facilitated by Human Resources.
 - 4.2.3 A 10-minute presentation including question and answer session as well as a structured interview comprising the Portfolio Holder, Deputy Chief Executive representing the Chief Executive, Chief Fire Officer to whom the role reports to and a HR Manager.
 - 4.2.4 A summary session was conducted to discuss the outcomes of the earlier assessment centre exercises – Lumina Spark and Staff Panel.

5. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

- 5.1 Following completion of the assessment set out above, the interview panel identified the preferred candidate for the role, currently employed as Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.2 Conclusions were reached following a thorough assessment of the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience. The processes also considered the candidate fit against the Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The candidate's application form (confidential) is attached at appendix 1.

5.3 The candidate has been informed that he is the preferred candidate for the role and has indicated his acceptance of the conditional offer of appointment. The offer has been made subject to the recommendation of this Committee and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules (as set out below).

5.4 **Officer Employment Procedure Rules**

5.4.1 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires that, where a Council is operating a Cabinet and Leader model of governance, before any offer of appointment is made to a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose, notifies the Leader and every member of the Cabinet of the intention to make the appointment, the name, salary and other relevant particulars of the post, and allows the Leader and Cabinet an opportunity to make any substantial or well-founded objections to that appointment, before the appointment is made. These provisions apply irrespective of whether the appointment is made by the full Council, a committee, or by an officer of the Council delegated to do so. The provisions are broadly set out in Part 4.3 of the Northumberland County Council Constitution.

5.4.2 Accordingly, for these purposes, appointment of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer is deemed to be a deputy chief officer.

5.4.3 The Proper Officer designated for this purpose is the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. Accordingly, the Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will discharge the functions as required under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

6. Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	Permanent appointment is deemed to be appropriate in relation to finance and value for money. The cost of the appointment can be met from existing budgets as it will be a direct replacement.

Legal	<p>The functions of the Staff and Appointments Committee are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. b. To consider, approve, or make recommendations to the County Council, in relation to any changes to the overall structure of the Council's workforce, and the number and designation of Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts. c. To determine the terms and conditions relating to employees of the County Council to include the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. <p>Section 2 (6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 specifies that the chief officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 is a Statutory Chief Officer. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reports to the Chief Fire Officer and is, therefore, classed as a Deputy Chief Officer</p>
Procurement	N/A
Human resources	The appointment will be made in line with appropriate employment recruitment processes. Relevant legal implications have been set out in the body of this report.
Property	N/A
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	<p>This process will be conducted in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's employment processes.</p> <p>N/A</p>
Risk assessment	Consistent approved management restructure with Corporate Governance Review.
Crime and disorder	N/A
Customer considerations	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and wellbeing	The recommendation will support the health and wellbeing of employees

Wards	Not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland
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7. Background papers

N/A

8. Links to other key reports already published

StAC Report dated 30th August 2023.

9. Author and Contact Details

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (s151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Dr Helen Paterson

This report has been prepared by Deborah Watson, HR Manager
Contact details: deborah.watson@northumberland.gov.uk

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STAFF & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

5th December 2023

Proposed Appointment Process of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)

Report of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed appointment process for the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) within Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service. The current postholder has been successful in their application and subject to StAC approval on 5th December 2023 will be appointed to Deputy Chief Fire Officer, therefore, the ACFO post will become vacant from 11th December 2023. This report aims to set out the proposed process to appoint a permanent replacement.
- 1.2 This report also seeks approval that at the conclusion to the selection process, the preferred candidate will be notified of their conditional appointment, subject to the approval of Staff and Appointments Committee.
- 1.3 This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Accordingly, please note that the appointment referred to in this report is subject to no substantial and well-founded objections being notified to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Part 4.3 of the Constitution (Officer Employment Procedure Rules).

2. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 2.1 To agree that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer will align to the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services terms and conditions ('Gold Book') with remuneration aligning to NCC pay grade of Band 16, £103,133 SCP 65 (spot salary). This cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions.

- 2.2 To approve external advertisement of the post following consideration at this meeting of the Staffing and Appointments Committee for the period 15 December 2023 to 12 January 2024. Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an Assessment Day at the end of January 2024 (date TBA). The assessment will include Psychometric testing, staff panel comprising NFRS key employees, and a formal interview by a panel comprising senior managers.
- 2.3 To accept the findings of the selection panels that the preferred candidate be offered the role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer subject to the final approval of Staff and Appointments Committee.
- 2.4 To agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader and/or Cabinet that the appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- 2.5 To note that offers of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- 2.6 To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is to be confirmed following completion of all the necessary pre-employment checks.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

- 3.1 This report is relevant to all areas of the Corporate Plan as it relates to ensuring that the Council is compliant with the constitution and is fulfilling its legal duties and requirements to ensure that there is an effective and fit for purpose staffing establishment.

4. Key Issues and Background

4.1 Salary

4.1.1 The job description (Appendix 1) has been evaluated through the LGE process as part of the changes to the senior management structure within NCC.

4.1.2 Band 16 currently consists of 6 spinal column points (SCP) :

SCP 64 - £100,157

SCP 65 - £103,133

SCP 66 - £106,107

SCP 67 - £109,081

- 4.1.3 The intention is to make an offer at SCP65 (spot salary) as this matches the SCP that the current postholder is paid and recognises the scale and scope of the services areas covered. The advertisement will ask for a minimum level of substantive Area Manager with significant sector experience operating at a strategic level to ensure knowledge and experience for the role reflects the remuneration

5. Outline Recruitment timeline and process/methodology

- 5.1 Psychometric Assessment will be undertaken to gain information on candidate personality and potential suitability against the role profile. Psychometric assessment will also allow the mapping of desirable values and behaviours against personality attributes and traits. The tool that is proposed to be used is called 'Lumina' and will be administered internally via our HR/OD service. This tool has been used to great effect in previous recruitment exercises for the Chief Executive and executive team, as well as the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.2 An ACFO Assessment Centre will be delivered at West Hartford HQ. This will be designed to be delivered in-person, using a combination of in-house assessors and co-ordinators and will be supported by HR. Elements to be included:
- o A structured interview with a panel of NFRS staff
 - o A 10-minute presentation to panel and a structured interview conducted by a panel comprising of Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Portfolio holder and HR.

6. Timeline

- 6.1 The process has been structured to keep to tight timelines, keeping candidate interest and momentum, while affording the opportunity to ensure all constitutional approval requirements are fully adhered to.

7. The next steps

- 7.1 Once a preferred candidate has been identified, a further report will be prepared for the Staff and Appointments Committee to convene at a later date and consider approval of the appointment.

8. Statutory Obligations and Pay Policy

- 8.1 There are certain statutory appointments which must be made. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 section 4 requires that the Council designate one of its officers as Head of the Paid Service (usually the Chief Executive) who is responsible for preparing reports on the way the local authority's staff is organised, on the authority's staffing needs and on the coordination of the way in which the authority's functions are discharged.
- 8.2 In addition, by section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council is required to produce a Pay Policy each financial year. Approval of the Pay Policy is a matter for full Council and cannot be delegated. The Council's current Pay Policy is 2023/2024 and sets out details, amongst other things, of the payment to chief officers.
- 8.3 The Staff & Appointments Committee is therefore required to consider and approve the appointments of the roles on a salary of over £100,000 in line with the Council's agreed Pay Policy 2023/24 as follows,

"Notwithstanding any other requirement of the Constitution, any appointment within the Council that attracts a salary package of £100,000 or more will be considered and approved by the Staff & Appointments Committee. Salary package in this respect includes salary and any other fees, allowances, bonuses and benefits in kind that the post holder would routinely be entitled to".

9. Officer Appointment Procedure Rules

- 9.1 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires that, where a Council is operating a Cabinet and Leader model of governance, before any offer of appointment is made to a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose, notifies the Leader and every member of the Cabinet of the intention to make the appointment, the name, salary and other relevant particulars of the post, and allows the Leader and Cabinet an opportunity to make any substantial or well-founded objections to that appointment, before the appointment is made. These provisions apply irrespective of whether the appointment is made by the full council, a committee, or by an officer of the council delegated to do so. The provisions are broadly set out in Part 4.3 of the Northumberland County Council Constitution. These provisions also apply whether the appointment is permanent or interim.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	Permanent appointment is deemed to be appropriate in relation to finance and value for money. The cost of the appointment can be met from existing budgets as it will be a direct replacement.
Legal	<p>The functions of the Staff and Appointments Committee are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. To consider, approve, or make recommendations to the County Council, in relation to any changes to the overall structure of the Council's workforce, and the number and designation of Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer posts. To determine the terms and conditions relating to employees of the County Council to include the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. <p>Section 2 (6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 specifies that the chief officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 is a Statutory Chief Officer. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reports to the Chief Fire Officer and is, therefore, classed as a Deputy Chief Officer</p>
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	The appointment will be made in line with appropriate employment recruitment processes. Relevant legal implications have been set out in the body of this report.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recruitment process for this post will be in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's recruitment processes.
Risk Assessment	Consistent with Independent Corporate Governance Review (Caller Report)
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	The recommendations will support the health and wellbeing of Council Employees at varying levels within the organisation
Wards	The recommendations not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland.

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Appendices N/A

Background papers:

N/A

Linked Reports

N/A

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (s151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Helen Paterson

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by Deborah Watson, HR Manager

Contact details: deborah.watson@northumberland.gov.uk



Northumberland County Council

STAFF & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

5 December 2023

Appointment of Deputy Chief Officer – Head of OD and Culture

Report of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee a course of action taken in response to the unexpected withdrawal of the preferred candidate for the Head of OD and Culture and the sourcing and approval of an alternative preferred candidate.
- 1.2 Attached to this report is a confidential (part 2) exempt appendix setting out the application of the preferred candidate.
- 1.3 This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment (or dismissal) of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Accordingly, please note that the appointment referred to in this report is subject to no substantial and well-founded objections being notified to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Part 4.3 of the Constitution (Officer Employment Procedure Rules).

2. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 2.1 To accept the conclusion of the hiring manager that the preferred candidate has been appointed to the role of Head of OD and Culture. The candidate's CV outlining their skills and experience are set out in the attached confidential appendix 1.

- 2.2 To agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader and/or Cabinet that the appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- 2.3 To note that the offer of employment has been subject to all necessary pre-employment checks and is for an initial fixed term period of 3 months.
- 2.4 To agree that this initial 3 month fixed term period can be extended for the full 3-year fixed term period upon satisfactory performance during the initial 3 months of employment. Thereafter, the standard probationary policy would apply.
- 2.5 To note that the effective date of commencement of employment is 13 November 2023.
- 2.6 To agree that the Head of OD and Culture receives staff benefits in line with all Council employees and remuneration of £76,364 per annum within pay band 14 (this cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions). Band 14 is presented below

2.6.1

BAND 14	SCP	Value
	56	£76,364
	57	£79,336
	58	£82,315
	59	£85,286

3. Process and Timeline

- 3.1 All vacancies at Head of Service level and above were shared with this committee on 25 April 2023 in the context of the senior management review report. The rate of recruitment to these roles has varied due to different processes being deployed dependent on the specific nature of the role.
- 3.2 An initial exercise to recruit a Head of OD and Culture was undertaken in June 2023 and an offer was made shortly afterwards. The preferred candidate was approved by this committee on 28 July 2023.
- 3.3 A start date of 6 November 2023 was agreed with the candidate in order to accommodate their notice period and work commitments within their existing role.
- 3.4 Time critical projects were delayed until the Head of OD and Culture's 6 November start date, including initiation of significant pieces of work to be delivered under the BEST programme.
- 3.5 On 12 October 2023, the original approved candidate unexpectedly withdrew their acceptance of the post due to a change in their personal circumstances.

This was approximately 3 weeks prior to their planned start date.

- 3.6 Given the work programme that had accrued whilst awaiting their start date and the time limited funding of the role, it has been essential to identify an alternative candidate promptly.
- 3.7 The vacancy created by the preferred candidate's withdrawal was advertised externally on an interim consultancy basis pending longer term direct recruitment to the role. Candidate sourcing was undertaken with the assistance of a recruitment partner 'Sullivan Brown'.
- 3.8 A number of interim candidates were longlisted. Longlisted candidates were invited to an informal discussion with the Director of Workforce and OD.
- 3.9 During this initial selection phase, a strong candidate was identified and, fortuitously, expressed an interest in applying for the role in a directly employed, longer term capacity.
- 3.10 A formal interview process was subsequently arranged with the candidate and they were also invited to meet the Director of Strategic Change and Service Improvement who they would be working closely with on the BEST programme.
- 3.11 The preferred candidate was invited to complete a Lumina psychometric assessment.
- 3.12 Following conclusion of the process the preferred candidate was identified as a high quality, experienced, strategic OD leader capable of undertaking the role of Head of OD and Culture.

4. The Preferred Candidate

- 4.1 The conclusion above was reached following a thorough assessment of the candidates' skills, knowledge and experience. The process also considered the preferred candidate's fit against the Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The candidate's CV (confidential) is attached as appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.2 Given the pace of the OD interim market and competition for quality candidates, a conditional offer was made subject to standard pre-employment checks with a start date to be agreed as soon as possible.
- 4.3 The candidate was available immediately and due to the risk of delay to critical BEST activities, a start date of 13 November was agreed.
- 4.4 It is recognised that appointments of Deputy Chief Officers such as this require prior approval by this committee but on this occasion, as an immediate start date was achievable and beneficial for the council, and there was a risk of the candidate receiving an alternative offer, StAC are requested to retrospectively ratify the appointment.

4.5 The initial 3 month fixed term contract period offered to the preferred candidate is in recognition of the requirements outlined in 4.4 above and to minimise any potential risk to the council.

4.6 All pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed and the candidate commenced in role on 13 November 2023. They have been advised that their appointment is subject to the recommendation of this Committee and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules (as set out below).

5. Officer Employment Procedure Rules

5.1 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) requires that, where a Council is operating a Cabinet and Leader model of governance, before any offer of appointment is made to a Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose, notifies the Leader and every member of the Cabinet of the intention to make the appointment, the name, salary and other relevant particulars of the post, and allows the Leader and Cabinet an opportunity to make any substantial or well-founded objections to that appointment, before the appointment is made. These provisions apply irrespective of whether the appointment is made by the full Council, a committee, or by an officer of the Council delegated to do so. The provisions are broadly set out in Part 4.3 of the Northumberland County Council Constitution.

5.2 Accordingly, for these purposes, the aforementioned role is deemed to be a deputy chief officer.

5.3 The Proper Officer designated for this purpose is the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. Accordingly, the Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will discharge the functions as required under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR policies and procedures
Finance and value for money	Appointment to this fixed term role is deemed to be appropriate and the cost of appointment will be met from within the Council's transformation budget.
Legal	Under the Pay Policy Statement, the Council has delegated to StAC the function to appoint and approve any roles that attract a salary of £100k or more. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, where a Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance, before any appointment is made to Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose notifies the Leader and every member of the Cabinet on the intention to make the appointment, the name, the

	<p>salary and other relevant particulars of the post, allowing any well-founded objections, before an appointment is made.</p> <p>Chief Officer is defined in s43 of the Localism Act 2011 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of the authority’s paid service • The monitoring officer • Any statutory chief officer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The person having responsibility for all statutory purposes (inc. s151 of the Local Government Act 1972), for the administration of the authority’s financial affairs. 2. The Director of Children’s Services appointed under s18 of the Children Act 2004. 3. The Director of Adult Social Services appointed under section 6 (A1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (as amended by the Children Act 2004). 4. The Director of Public Health appointed under s73A (1) of the National Health Service Act 2006. 5. The Director of Education appointed under s532 of the Education Act. 6. The Chief Fire Officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 and appointed under regulations made under section 18(1)(a) of that Act. • Any non-statutory officer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person for whom the head of the authority's paid service is directly responsible. 2. A person who in relation to most of their duties is required to report direct or is directly accountable to the head of paid service and any person who similarly is required to report direct or is directly accountable to the authority or its committees. <p>A Deputy Chief Officer is a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of their post, is required to report directly to one or more of the Chief Officers.</p> <p>StAC will also determine the terms and conditions relating the employees of the Council including the remuneration and terms of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.</p>
Procurement	Contracting of the recruitment partnering company mentioned at 3.7 was conducted in accordance with procurement guidelines

Human Resources	All processes referenced in this report have been made in line with appropriate employment policies and relevant legal advice has been sought as required.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This process was conducted in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's employment processes.
Risk Assessment	Consistent approved Management Restructure with Corporate Governance Review
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	The recommendations will support the health and wellbeing of employees
Wards	Not related to any ward but cover the whole of Northumberland

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Confidential – CV of preferred candidate

Background papers:

N/A

Linked Reports

StAC report and minutes – 25 April 2023

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (s151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Dr Helen Paterson

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by:
Sarah Farrell – Director of Workforce and OD
07770 971 861



Northumberland County Council

STAFF & APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

5 December 2023

Redefinition of role currently assigned as Director of Strategy and Communications and change of job title to 'Assistant Chief Executive'

Report of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval that the role of the current Director of Strategy and Communications be redefined in terms of role content and that the job title be changed to 'Assistant Chief Executive.

2. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

2.1 To approve that the current postholder be assigned to the role of Assistant Chief Executive.

2.2 To agree that, subject to approval of recommendation 2.1 above, the change to job title take effect from 1 December 2023.

2.3 To note that all other terms and conditions of employment, including the evaluated band 16 and salary of £100,157 per annum, remain unchanged.

3. Background

3.1 The role of Director of Strategy and Communications was established as a result of the senior management review that was approved by this committee on 25 April 2023 and took effect on 1 July 2023.

3.2 As the Chief Executive and executive management team have embedded, and appointments subordinate to the role have been made, the requirements of the role of the Director of Strategy and Communications have accordingly changed.

3.3 Increasingly, the postholder has been called upon to support the Chief Executive as their principal strategic adviser on corporate strategy, policy, priorities and performance.

3.4 There has also been a requirement that the postholder represent the Chief Executive in dealings with external stakeholders and groups, including external task & finish groups. The responsibility for deputising for the Chief Executive remains with Executive Directors.

4. Proposal

4.1 At present, the job description and job title belies the aforementioned responsibilities and does not reflect the role content. It is proposed that job description content is updated to reflect the prevailing and intended longer term role purpose.

4.2 It is also proposed that a more appropriately befitting job title of ‘Assistant Chief Executive’ be assigned to the role to ensure that it is recognised as a legitimate representative of the Chief Executive.

4.3 The updated job description has been evaluated in accordance with the LGE job evaluation scheme for senior managers. The evaluation determined that there is no change to the previously evaluated Band 16.

4.4 The updated job description is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

4.5 It is proposed that the existing postholder be assigned to the redefined role with effect from 1 December 2023.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR policies and procedures
Finance and value for money	
Legal	<p>Under the Pay Policy Statement, the Council has delegated to StAC the function to appoint and approve any roles that attract a salary of £100k or more.</p> <p>Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, where a Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance, before any appointment is made to Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, the Proper Officer designated for that purpose notifies the Leader and every member of the</p>

	<p>Cabinet on the intention to make the appointment, the name, the salary and other relevant particulars of the post, allowing any well-founded objections, before an appointment is made.</p> <p>Chief Officer is defined in s43 of the Localism Act 2011 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head of the authority’s paid service • The monitoring officer • Any statutory chief officer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The person having responsibility for all statutory purposes (inc. s151 of the Local Government Act 1972), for the administration of the authority’s financial affairs. 2. The Director of Children’s Services appointed under s18 of the Children Act 2004. 3. The Director of Adult Social Services appointed under section 6 (A1) of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (as amended by the Children Act 2004). 4. The Director of Public Health appointed under s73A (1) of the National Health Service Act 2006. 5. The Director of Education appointed under s532 of the Education Act. 6. The Chief Fire Officer of a fire brigade maintained under the Fire Services Act 1947 and appointed under regulations made under section 18(1)(a) of that Act. • Any non-statutory officer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person for whom the head of the authority’s paid service is directly responsible. 2. A person who in relation to most of their duties is required to report direct or is directly accountable to the head of paid service and any person who similarly is required to report direct or is directly accountable to the authority or its committees. <p>A Deputy Chief Officer is a person who, as respects all or most of the duties of their post, is required to report directly to one or more of the Chief Officers.</p> <p>StAC will also determine the terms and conditions relating the employees of the Council including the remuneration and terms of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.</p>
Procurement	N/A

Human Resources	All processes referenced in this report have been made in line with appropriate employment policies and relevant legal advice has been sought as required.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	N/A
Wards	Not related to any ward but cover the whole of Northumberland

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Assistant Chief Executive Job Description

Background papers:

N/A

Linked Reports

[StAC report and minutes – 25 April 2023](#)

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Transformation & Resources (s151)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive (HoPS)	Dr Helen Paterson

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by:
Sarah Farrell – Director of Workforce and OD
07770 971 861

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PART A: JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTORATE:	Chief Executive's
JOB TITLE:	Assistant Chief Executive
GRADE:	Band 16
JD REF:	H237
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	<p>To assist the Chief Executive and the Council's Executive Management Team in the corporate management of the Council.</p> <p>To represent the Chief Executive with external stakeholders and groups, including external task & finish groups. This includes supporting Executive Directors when they are deputising for the Chief Executive.</p> <p>To assist the Leader of Council in his community leadership role.</p> <p>To lead on external affairs, corporate policy, consultation, engagement and establishing, coordinating and managing external relationships with the Chief Executive and the Executive Directors.</p>
Service/ Functions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Policy and Strategy • Corporate Affairs, including representing the Chief Executive with external stakeholders and groups • Corporate Performance monitoring and reporting • Communications and engagement • Strategic research (Residents Survey, Budget Engagement) • Coordinating and delivering engagement with Central Government and Regional Partners including the Combined Authority

Employees:	This postholder leads and manages a mix of professional and technical staff across policy, strategy, performance and communications & engagement. The staff complement amounts to circa 19 FTE. The postholder will also provide leadership to cross-directorate, matrix and task & finish teams.
Budget	<p>The postholder has a particular responsibility to provide policy, communications and engagement support to the Council's budget setting process to ensure resources are aligned to the Corporate priorities and that arrangements are in place to track progress.</p> <p>The gross budget directly managed by this postholder amounts to circa £1m.</p>
Other Resources	As required to ensure that both day to day and transformational activity is undertaken to deliver resident focused and value for money services in line with the Council's Constitution, Vision and Corporate plan and meet statutory requirements and democratic processes in a manner that is transparent, efficient and effective. The postholder has particular responsibility for ensuring delivery of the Corporate Plan and associated monitoring arrangements.

JOB PURPOSE:

To support the Chief Executive as principal strategic adviser on corporate strategy, policy, priorities and performance.

To represent the Chief Executive with external stakeholders and groups, including external task & finish groups. This includes supporting Executive Directors when they deputise for the Chief Executive.

To play a constructive role as a member of the Council's Executive Management and Strategic Leadership Teams. This entails contributing to collective responsibility for the corporate leadership of the Council and delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management (people, finance and other assets).

To lead on key corporate services which ensure the Council has the right frameworks and processes to deliver its ambitions and track progress and performance. The services within the remit of this post play a central role in ensuring the Council, its Members and Officers, understand how different activities fit within the overall Corporate Plan Priorities. The ACX will be accountable to the Chief Executive for the following functions:

- Corporate Plan and contributing to the development of a County Mission with the Executive Director, Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities
- Ensuring best practice processes for monitoring and reporting

performance across the Council's services

- Contributing to the review and development of internal and external structures and governance
- Leading policy research and advice to EMT / SLT and other Members
- Corporate Affairs
- Communications & Engagement, ensuring the Council's key messages, services and plans are understood internally and externally as well as ensuring an effective Council reputation and brand management
- Corporate Consultation
- Research
- External partnerships and relationships, with the Executive Director, Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities

To ensure Members of the Council are supported in their leadership & community roles

To oversee major corporate policy and strategy reviews

To ensure the Council's voice is heard in important national and regional issues – this will require activities to take place with local, regional or national partners, optimising shared resources. The post holder will be a participant in shaping and delivering activities which make the best use of the Council capacity working alongside partners.

To lead on corporate performance monitoring and reporting and advising on progress against the Council's three corporate priorities.

To contribute to corporate programme boards which develop strategy and policy.

To be accountable for those budgets related to the Service.

To lead by example and foster a culture across the Council, which engages all staff and partners in the development and delivery of services which meet residents' needs and expectations.

As a Director, ensure that effective governance and assurance processes, including reviews and audits are applied in all activity as set down in the Constitution and Council policies and procedures to safeguard the Council's financial and statutory duties and demonstrate public accountability and scrutiny of its decision-making processes.

Discharge the functions within the remit of the portfolio having regard to the decision-making framework and arrangements.

KEY FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

To be the Chief Executive's principal adviser on corporate strategy, policy, priorities, performance, communications and corporate affairs. This involves ensuring arrangements are in place to review progress and performance so that timely and transparent information is provided to Council committees, enabling all appropriate bodies to make informed and timely decisions.

To represent the Chief Executive, at their request, as necessary.

Coordinating and managing key, external stakeholders and groups, including external task & finish groups on behalf of the Chief Executive and the Executive Directors.

Supporting the corporate leadership of the Council and delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management (people, finance and other assets), including leading cross-directorate matrix working.

Fully understanding and upholding the Constitution, Scheme of delegation and Contract Procedure Rules of the Council and ensuring they are followed and considered in the formulation of strategy, policy, communications and corporate affairs so that services can be resourced and delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This post leads on the design and implementation of the Council's policy framework balancing legal requirements, recognising different service needs and those of Northumberland residents.

Lead support to the Chief Executive, Leadership, all Members and Executive Directors in developing the vision and priorities for the County and ensuring advice is provided on the most appropriate responses to internal and external drivers of change. This will involve providing specific advice in relation to the functions across the organisation and ensuring the Council engages in a transparent and positive way with communities and stakeholders.

Ensuring effective relationships between Members and Officers, maintaining and developing essential Member / Officer partnerships and processes which support and promote a positive and respectful relationship between Members and Officers.

Ensuring the Council meets best practice standards relating to communication and engagement, delivering transparency and supporting services across the organisation.

Ensuring Northumberland's 'voice' is heard and understood in national, regional and countywide forums.

Delivering smart, impactful, dynamic and sensible Council communications and marketing campaigns.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Ensuring the Council's Corporate Priorities align with, and shape national and regional policy. Coordinating local, regional and, national policy alignment across the Council's services.

Delivering a best-practice corporate performance monitoring and reporting function.

Leading leading-edge, transparent communication and engagement with all residents and stakeholders.

Support the Council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that services are designed and delivered in a way that reflects difference and shows understanding of the population's circumstances and needs.

Role model people-centred, values based and inclusive organisational behaviours that promotes innovation, creativity and improvement.

Optimise performance, and deployment of resources (Human, Physical and Financial) that puts at its heart the provision of high quality, value for money services and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the directorate to deliver successfully against the Council's ambitions and priorities bearing in mind statutory requirements as well as local frameworks, policies and procedures. In addition, the postholder is indirectly responsible for the whole of the Council's budget by ensuring that decisions on expenditure follow proper rules of governance.

Promote and maintain the highest standards of conduct by providing best practice advice.

Actively demonstrate commitment to an inclusive, supportive, and constructive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and diversity is valued in the workplace, in service delivery and communications.

Lead and monitor the efficient and effective implementation of major programmes and initiatives where the postholder is the lead.

Provide assurance that strategies and plans enable appropriate levels of financial and governance control.

Oversee the scrutiny and advice on the plans and actions of Central Government and other external agencies to determine their impact on the development of local policies and priorities such as they relate to place shaping, regeneration and care for people in need and position the Council as a decisive and influential organisation to maximise all available assets to provide the best possible services.

Ensure equality, diversity and cohesion principles are embedded across all services. Provide leadership around diversity and inclusion, ensuring that the policies and services of the Council reflect the changing needs of all our communities and workforce and that equality of opportunity is ensured, and diversity celebrated.
Represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council at local, regional, and national levels, promoting inter-authority working across the region and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to change. This work will particularly relate to the need to ensure appropriate measures are in place to protect the Council's reputation in making good decisions that make best use of public resources and comply with legislative requirements.
Take a proactive role within the Council's Corporate Emergency Planning arrangements, as a Tactical Lead (Silver Command). This includes a requirement to be available in the event of an emergency to perform the duties allocated to the post within the Emergency Plan.
To support the Returning Officer as a Deputy Returning Officer to deliver accurate and effective counts in local, regional and national elections.
Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are carried out in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Special Conditions:
This position has been identified as a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Therefore, the post holder is restricted from undertaking or participating in any political activity.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PART B: SENIOR MANAGERS CORE COMPETENCIES

Working with Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively across services and departments to deliver corporate excellence. • Work collaboratively with external partners to deliver excellent service. • Seek opportunities for partnership working at a local, regional, national level. • Clarify expectations, objectives and working arrangements of partnerships. • Contribute effectively to multi-partner projects. 	

Serving our Community	
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- Developing and promoting the County Mission.
- Seek and act on feedback from the community.
- Influence Service and Corporate plans to reflect community needs
- Develop, deliver, and improve access to services based on an awareness and understanding of the diverse community
- Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery

Working within the Political Arena

- Understand and actively support the role of Members.
- Understand and actively support the democratic process within Northumberland Council.
- Recognise the impact of Government and legislation on Council strategy and services.
- Consult, support, and keep Councillors informed.

Delivering Excellence

- Understand how corporate performance is measured.
- Monitor and evaluate services in relation to objectives and performance indicators.
- Establish a culture that embraces the agreed Vision and Values.
- Be positive ambassadors for the organisation.
- Contribute to strengthening corporate leadership capacity.
- Identify opportunities where organisational performance could be improved.

Focusing on the Future

- Scan the external environment, look ahead, assess strategic options, and develop the Council in the medium and long term.
- Lead the development and implementation of corporate policy at a strategic level.
- Challenge what we do and how we do it.
- Influence relevant national and regional organisations and partners.
- Connect plans, policies, strategies, and services to provide consistent service delivery.
- Generate innovative ideas.
- Translate strategy into action.
- Consider the implications of decisions across the Council and act in the overall interests of Council performance.

Building Shared Vision and Values

- Scan the internal environment and engage employees in compelling visions of the future.
- Create an environment in which a culture embracing our Vision and Values can thrive.
- Involve all stakeholders in building a vision for the future.
- Have a clear picture of the direction the organisation is taking and communicate it with insight, energy, and vision.
- Translate the Council's vision into practical and achievable plans.

Strengthening Corporate Leadership Capacity

- Continuously develop the political leadership and managerial interface.
- Operate with others as a cohesive senior managerial team.
- Create time with staff and other managers for discussion about their development.
- Coach and mentor staff and other managers.
- Lead, delegate and empower others at a strategic level.
- Identify and develop potential senior managerial successors.

Promoting and Facilitating Change

- Critically evaluate the reasons that prompt change and take appropriate action.
- Proactively steer internal change.
- Proactively manage the exchange of information between the public and the organisation.
- Consider the resource implications of change.
- Anticipate and respond to emotional and morale issues brought about by change.
- Monitor and evaluate the change process to ensure aims are met.

Subject to Approval

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

PART C: PERSON SPECIFICATION

DIRECTORATE:	Chief Executive
JOB TITLE:	Assistant Chief Executive
GRADE:	Band 16

Qualifications/Professional Development
Relevant professional qualification which demonstrates understanding of devising organisation -wide strategy in a complex setting and/or considerable experience in formulating strategy in large multifunctional setting
Evidence of relevant up to date leadership and management training.
Evidence of recent relevant Continuous Professional Development to demonstrate up to date understanding of local government legislation and standards.
Experience, Knowledge, and Skills
Proven achievement of corporate leadership success working in a large and complex organisation with comparable scope, responsibilities and resources and devising Strategies which address challenging circumstances .
Demonstrable track record in researching best practice across local governments and horizon scanning to ensure the organisation is able to assess and apply new initiatives where appropriate to achievement of the overall vision.
Significant and proven experience in leading the development and implementation of strategies which help an organisation to manage its reputation to positive effect incorporating appropriate marketing and brand management initiatives. The impact of these initiatives should be measurable.
Ability to operate sensitively in a political environment, developing relationships with all Members gaining respect, trust, and confidence and being accountable for effective decisions and delivery within a challenging environment.
Significant achievement in delivering major change which might be viewed as disruptive but necessary to achieve the organisation’s ambitions.
Experience of devising and implementing corporate performance frameworks and systems which support timely and effective scrutiny of performance at both a corporate and service level.

Experience of devising strategies which maximise opportunities for people to communicate and engage with the Council, whether as residents, partner or other stakeholders.
Significant experience of working with diverse communities to maximise opportunities for Co-design of services which reflect different needs and experience and promote equality so that people feel involved valued and empowered.
Evidence of personally leading within an organisational culture that models and embeds the practice of co-production and collaboration with people inside and outside the organisation.
Evidence of success in personally leading the development of external relationships and influential partnerships that have delivered tangible benefits and created a collaborative environment.
Evidence of using strong option appraisal, analytical skills, and innovation to achieve organisational success in an environment of reducing financial resources. Experience of corporate and political research skills.
Highly developed ability to devise long term strategies which are relevant and adaptable bringing in new ideas based on best practice, innovation, and proven solutions.
Highly skilled communicator who communicates with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm and can demonstrate integrity, create rapport, and build trust and confidence to positively influence outcomes.
Ability to translate complex ideas and information into meaningful and 'user-friendly' information; 'tells the story' to bring people along and ensure all audiences understand the key messages.
Ability to develop strong relationships with senior leaders from a range of public and private sector organisations. Evidence of working closely with a Chief Executive and representing them.
Strong personal and professional integrity and credibility that establishes respect, trust, and confidence especially in building relationships at the highest level.
Demonstrate personal resilience and ability to thrive in challenging circumstances.
Model and demonstrate organisational values and leadership behaviours, creating a shared purpose and positive permission culture that enables people to thrive through development, involvement, and well-being.
Motivation

Confident leader with a vision for Northumberland with high levels of energy, stamina, and resilience.
Fully committed to the principles and values underpinning the Council
Demonstrably strong corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues that inhibit organisational progress to high quality service delivery.
Personality, behaviour, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of Council Members, senior managers, staff, the public, external partners, and other stakeholders.

Subject to Approval

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Northumberland County Council

Staff and Appointments Committee

5 December 2023

Probationary period completion - Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Report of the Director of Workforce and OD

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the status of probationary assessments for the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Director of Law and Corporate Governance of the Council.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note that all probationary periods have been satisfactorily completed and, in accordance with the relevant policy (appendices 1, 2 and 3), employment has been confirmed.

3. Links to the Corporate Plan

3.1 This report is relevant to all areas of the Corporate Plan as it relates to ensuring that the Council has a robust mechanism for measuring the performance of the council's most senior officers and ensuring corporate objectives are met.

3.2 This report ensures that the Council is managed and governed in line with legislation and the structure of accountability is clearly stated and is set out in a transparent way.

4. Background

- 4.1 Specific policies relating to performance appraisal procedures (incorporating probation) for the Chief Executive and Executive Directors were approved by this committee on 20 February 2023 and 30 August 2023 respectively.
- 4.2 The policy pertaining to the Chief Executive appears at appendix 1 and for the Executive Directors at appendix 2.
- 4.3 Both policies make specific reference to probation and the following principles are common to both:
- 4.3.1 Probationary periods run for 6 months from the first day of employment
 - 4.3.2 An interim performance discussion takes place at 3 months
 - 4.3.3 An end of probation review takes place at 5 months
 - 4.3.4 During this time, all reasonable support and development will be sought, offered and accepted so that the probationary objectives will be achieved.
- 4.4 The Chief Executive's objectives and developmental needs, for the first five months of their employment, are drafted with the Chief Executive, Council Leader and Deputy Leader.
- 4.5 The Executive Director's objectives and developmental needs, for the first five months of their employment, are drafted with the Executive Director and the Chief Executive.
- 4.6 The Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer) is subject to the council's probationary policy (appendix 3).
- 4.7 The Director of Law and Corporate Governance's probationary objectives and developmental needs, are drafted with the Director and the Chief Executive.

5. Probationary outcomes

- 5.1 During the first 6 months of 2023 the Council made offers of employment to external candidates for the following roles:
- Chief Executive (commenced 8 February 2023)
 - Executive Director of Place and Regeneration (commenced 1 April 2023)
 - Executive Director of Transformation and Resources (commenced 1 April 2023)
 - Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities, and Stronger Communities (commenced 1 March 2023)
 - Director of Law and Corporate Governance (commenced 5 June 2023)
- 5.2 All probationary reviews have been undertaken fully in accordance with the principles outlined in the relevant policies.
- 5.3 All probationary periods have been satisfactorily concluded and employment has been confirmed. Individual written confirmation advising of this has been issued accordingly.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	
Legal	The legal implications are as set out in the body of the report
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	Implications have been considered and the proposed recommendations are consistent with best practice and employment law.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recommendations are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation
Risk Assessment	Consistent with Independent Corporate Governance Review (Caller Report)
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	The recommendations will support the personal development of the Chief Executive and Executive Directors and their wellbeing.
Wards	The recommendations are not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland.

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and Members have agreed the content of the report:

Role	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Finance (S151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Performance Appraisal Procedure for the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council

Appendix 2 – Performance Appraisal Procedure for the Executive Directors of Northumberland County Council

Background information

N/A

Linked reports

20 February 2023 - Staff and Appointments Committee report 'Chief Executive Performance Appraisal'

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by the Director of Workforce & OD

Contact details:

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Director of Workforce and OD
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Appendix 1

Performance Appraisal Procedure for the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council

Introduction

This procedure seeks to ensure that the Chief Executive's performance is formally reviewed on a regular basis. It complies with the principles set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives (national salary framework & conditions of service) handbook.

Principles

There are a number of general principles that underpin this procedure. They are as follows:

- A clear link between Chief Executive objectives and the Corporate Plan ensuring measurable lines of accountability for performance.
- An objective setting process that allows for a balanced focus on 'what' and 'how', with performance standards and expectations clearly articulated at the beginning of the performance year.
- An all year round focus on helping to maximise the Chief Executive's job performance and identifying any development opportunities.
- Improved emphasis on recognising high performance throughout the year.
- Prompt identification, monitoring and tackling of underperformance.

Responsibilities for Appraisal

Under the responsibilities set out in the Northumberland County Council's constitution (7.1), the Staff and Appointments Committee;

- (p) *Considers and determines the overall scheme and policies in relation to employee terms and conditions and deals with the appointment of senior officers including making recommendations to Council on the appointment of the Head of Paid Service*

The Chief Executive's terms and conditions of employment include the following:

17. PROBATION

All employees new to the Council are subject to 6 months' probation where an external appointment is made. [The Chief Executive's] Probation reviews will be undertaken by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. The Council Leader will report the outcome of this process to Staff and Appointments Committee

18. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Chief Executive is required to actively participate in performance management and appraisal with elected members of the Council. The focus of this process should be on clarifying what the Chief Executive is expected to achieve and on identifying any continuing development needs which, if met, would maintain a high level of performance. The process of setting objectives should be by agreement and the result should be to identify objectives which are relevant and challenging but achievable. The Performance Appraisal Process will be the responsibility of the Leader and Deputy

Leader of the Council. An annual statement to Council will be published each year advising that a performance appraisal has taken place.

19. SELF DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Executive is required to participate in self-development or team development activities as required by the Council.

Main Features

The Chief Executive performance management process is made up of a number of stages which are outlined in more detail throughout this procedure. The main features include:

- a. Setting Performance Expectations and Agreeing Stretching Objectives: A performance expectation setting meeting should take place before the start of the annual performance year to make clear performance expectations for the Chief Executive. Objectives should be drafted between the Chief Executive, the Council Leader and the Deputy Leader and must focus on both the 'what' and the 'how'.
- b. Mid-year check: These should be conducted on at least a 6 monthly basis between the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive to ensure objectives remain relevant and that performance progress can be informally assessed on a continuous basis.
- c. End of Year Formal Appraisal: 'An annual performance assessment will be undertaken by the Leader and Deputy Leader. A summary of the outcome of the performance assessment process will be reported to the Staffing and Appointments Committee.
- d. Identification of Developmental Requirements: Appropriate professional development is identified if required.

Probation

An externally appointed Chief Executive's probation period will run for six months from their first day of employment with Northumberland County Council.

The Chief Executive's objectives and developmental needs, for the first five months of their employment, will be drafted with the Chief Executive, Council Leader and Deputy Leader at the earliest opportunity and formally recorded.

During this time, all reasonable support and development should be sought, offered and accepted so that the probationary objectives will be achieved.

After three months' employment an interim performance discussion will take place between the Chief Executive, the Council Leader and the Deputy Leader.

After five months' employment, an End of Probation Performance Discussion will take place between the Chief Executive, the Council Leader and the Deputy Leader. This will represent the formal End of Probation Performance Review. Following this, the Council Leader will report the outcome of this process to Staff and Appointments Committee their decision to either:

1. Confirm the Chief Executive's appointment
2. Extend their probationary period

3. Terminate their employment

Advice should be taken from the Director of HR and OD if members wish to pursue options 2 or 3.

The Chief Executive shall then be given written notification of the Outcome of their probationary period.

Appraisal Process

The Leader and Deputy Leader will undertake formal appraisals of the Chief Executive. The Director of HR and OD will provide administrative support and advice. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive should aim to reach mutual agreement for each appraisal. If this is not possible, the Chief Executive has the right of appeal.

The appraisal process contains the following elements:

a. Setting Performance Expectations and Agreeing Stretching Objectives

Before the start of each performance year the Council Leader and the Chief Executive will meet to discuss the Corporate Plan, the Council's strategic priorities and the performance expectations for the year ahead.

As part of his/her role profile, the Chief Executive has agreed to exercise leadership in the successful execution of the following objectives:

- Deliver the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities in line with the corporate plan, to benefit the people of Northumberland.
- Lead and develop the Council's Executive Team ensuring the delivery of effective strategic direction and resource management to enable the delivery of public services across the locality.
- Foster a culture and values, which engage all colleagues and partners in the development and delivery of services.
- Ensure that effective governance and assurance processes are in place to safeguard the Council's financial and statutory duties and demonstrate public accountability and scrutiny of its decision-making processes.
- Discharge the functions of the Head of Paid Service in accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, including promoting the effective, economic, and efficient deployment of the Council's resources. Ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution.
- Act as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

Objectives for the year, set as part of this process should help to achieve one or more of the above. They should, as far as possible, be specific, measurable, time bound and challenging but achievable. Objectives should focus on both the 'what' and the 'how' (in alignment to Northumberland County Council Values, Leadership Behaviours and Nolan Principles). The onus for writing the draft objectives should be on the Chief Executive and agreed in principle with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in their performance expectations and objective setting meeting, before the start of the performance year.

b. Regular Performance Conversations

The Chief Executive and Council Leader should hold regular performance conversations throughout the performance year. As a minimum these should be 6 monthly.

These performance conversations provide an informal opportunity to reflect on the role of the Chief Executive; what has been done well; what could have been done better; the major issues over the period ahead; and any development opportunities.

Objectives should be discussed to determine whether they should be revised in light of changing priorities.

As part of these conversations, account should be taken of how the Chief Executive demonstrates the standards of behaviour set out in the Northumberland County Council Values, Leadership Behaviours and Nolan Principles.

c. Mid-year Check

The Director of HR and OD will oversee the administration of the formal appraisal cycle.

The Leader and Deputy Leader will undertake mid year discussion with the Chief Executive, ideally every October. The outcomes of which will be recorded.

The performance of the Chief Executive must be assessed by taking account of both 'what' they have achieved and 'how' they have achieved it. A judgement should be made as to what extent objectives have been fulfilled to date, using the following criteria:

- 'What' they have achieved - whether objectives are on track to be met or not, and to what degree;
- 'How' they achieved it - the degree to which they have demonstrated Northumberland County Council's leadership behaviours;
- Demonstration of Northumberland County Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The Chief Executive is expected to exemplify these values; and
- Additional consideration should also be given to the degree of difficulty or ease of meeting the objectives in light of actual events.

When assessing these objectives, equal weight will be given both to 'what' and 'how' these objectives were achieved to ensure a balanced focus on delivery and behaviours.

The Leader and Deputy Leader should consider the Chief Executive's views carefully and decide, in advance of the interim appraisal interview, whether they agree with them or whether they wish to add, delete, change any of them.

d. End of year Formal Appraisal

The Director of HR and OD will oversee the administration of the formal appraisal cycle.

The Leader and Deputy Leader will undertake a year-end appraisal discussion with the Chief Executive ideally within the first two weeks of each April. The outcomes of which will be recorded.

The performance of the Chief Executive must be assessed by taking account of both 'what' they have achieved and 'how' they have achieved it. A judgement should be made as to what extent objectives have been fulfilled using the following criteria:

- 'What' they have achieved - whether objectives have been met or not, and to what degree;
- 'How' they achieved it - the degree to which they have demonstrated Northumberland County Council's leadership behaviours;
- Demonstration of Northumberland County Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The Chief Executive is expected to exemplify these values; and

- Additional consideration should also be given to the degree of difficulty or ease of meeting the objectives in light of actual events.

When assessing these objectives, equal weight will be given both to 'what' and 'how' these objectives were achieved to ensure a balanced focus on delivery and behaviours.

As the Chief Executive is accountable to the Council as a whole for their performance, an annual statement to Council will be published each year advising that a performance appraisal has taken place

e. Identify developmental requirements

Formal performance reviews should also identify the professional development necessary to equip the Chief Executive with the requisite skills and leadership behaviours to meet his/her objectives both now and in the future.

Progress against the development objectives will be discussed as part of the mid-year and year-end appraisals.

Appeal

Consensus through discussion is the ideal way to manage appraisals. If the Chief Executive disagrees with their appraisal they may appeal against it. They should submit detailed, written grounds for their appeal to the Director of HR and OD, who will arrange an appeal meeting. At the meeting, two elected members from the Staffing and Appointments Committee (StAC), who have had no previous involvement in the process, will consider the written appeal and any oral submission that the Chief Executive wishes to make. The Chief Executive may wish to bring an appropriate representative with them. The outcome of the appeal ie upheld or not upheld, will be reported to StAC.

The appeal panel's decision will be final.

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Appendix 1

Performance Appraisal Procedure for Executive Directors of Northumberland County Council

Introduction

This procedure seeks to ensure that Executive Director's performance is formally reviewed on a regular basis. It complies with the principles set out in the Joint Guidance on Appraisal of the Chief Officer from the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Chief Officers Conditions of Service Handbook.

Principles

There are a number of general principles that underpin this procedure. They are as follows:

- A clear link between Executive Director objectives and the Corporate Plan ensuring measurable lines of accountability for performance.
- An objective setting process that allows for a balanced focus on 'what' and 'how', with performance standards and expectations clearly articulated at the beginning of the performance year.
- An all year round focus on helping to maximise the Executive Director's job performance and identifying any development opportunities.
- Improved emphasis on recognising high performance throughout the year.
- Prompt identification, monitoring and tackling of underperformance.

Responsibilities for Appraisal

Under the responsibilities set out in Northumberland County Council's constitution (part 5, section 9, appendix A) it is the responsibility of the Staff and Appointments Committee;

9.33 (b) To determine the terms and conditions relating to employees of the County Council to include the remuneration and terms and conditions of employment for the Head of Paid Service and Chief and Deputy Chief Officers

The Executive Director terms and conditions of employment include the following:

17. PROBATION

All new senior managers will be subject to 6 months probation where an external appointment is made.

18. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Senior managers are required to actively participate in the prevailing Performance Management Scheme.

...

20 SELF DEVELOPMENT

Senior managers are required to participate in self development or team development activities as required by the Council. [You] are required to complete a number of

learning modules, some of which must be completed on an annual basis. Details of the required learning modules are found in Learning Together.

Main Features

The Executive Director performance management process is made up of a number of stages which are outlined in more detail throughout this procedure. The main features include:

- a. Setting Performance Expectations and Agreeing Stretching Objectives: A performance expectation setting meeting should take place before the start of the annual performance year to make clear performance expectations for the Executive Director. Objectives should be drafted between the Executive Director and the Chief Executive and must focus on both the 'what' and the 'how'.
- b. Mid-year check: These should be conducted on at least a 6 monthly basis between the Executive Director and Chief Executive to ensure objectives remain relevant and that performance progress can be informally assessed on a continuous basis.
- c. End of Year Formal Appraisal: An annual performance assessment will be undertaken by the Chief Executive. Confirmation that the performance assessment process for Executive Directors has been completed for the previous year will be reported to the Staffing and Appointments Committee in or around April of each year.
- d. Identification of Developmental Requirements: Appropriate professional development is identified if required.

Probation

An externally appointed Executive Director's probation period will run for six months from their first day of employment with Northumberland County Council.

The Executive Director's objectives and developmental needs, for the first five months of their employment, will be drafted with the Executive Director and the Chief Executive at the earliest opportunity and formally recorded.

During this time, all reasonable support and development should be sought, offered and accepted so that the probationary objectives will be achieved.

After three months' employment an interim performance discussion will take place between the Executive Director and the Chief Executive.

After five months' employment, an End of Probation Performance Discussion will take place between the Executive Director and the Chief Executive. This will represent the formal End of Probation Performance Review. Following this, the Chief Executive will report the outcome of this process to Staff and Appointments Committee their decision to either:

1. Confirm the Executive Director's appointment
2. Extend their probationary period
3. Terminate their employment

Advice should be taken from the Director of Workforce and OD if members wish to pursue options 2 or 3.

The Executive Director shall then be given written notification of the outcome of their probationary period.

Appraisal Process

The Chief Executive will undertake formal appraisals of the Executive Directors. The Chief Executive and respective Executive Director should aim to reach mutual agreement for each appraisal.

The appraisal process contains the following elements:

a. Setting Performance Expectations and Agreeing Stretching Objectives

At the start of each performance year the Executive Director and the Chief Executive will meet to discuss the Corporate Plan, the Council's strategic priorities, directorate priorities and the performance expectations for the year ahead.

As part of their role profile, Executive Directors have agreed to exercise leadership in the successful execution of the following objectives:

- To lead, steer, develop and manage services relating to their directorate in order to deliver the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities that fall within the remit of the portfolio and in line with the corporate plan to benefit the people of Northumberland.
- To play a full and positive role as a member of the Council's Senior Management Team ensuring the delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management (people, finance and other assets) to secure the delivery of public services across the locality. The postholder will be expected to deputise for the Chief Executive if requested and to provide cover if needed across the Executive Management Team.
- Lead by example and foster a culture, both with the Directorate and across the Council, which engages all staff and partners in the development and delivery of services which meet residents' needs and expectations. This will involve leading cross Council initiatives to make best use of individuals' strengths and help foster collaboration across the whole organisation.
- Ensure, as a senior executive, that effective governance and assurance processes are applied in all activity as set down in the Constitution and Council policies and procedures to safeguard the Council's financial and statutory duties and demonstrate public accountability and scrutiny of its decision-making processes.
- Discharge the functions within the remit of the portfolio having regard to the decision making framework and arrangements.

Objectives for the year, set as part of this process should help to achieve one or more of the above. They should, as far as possible, be specific, measurable, time bound and challenging but achievable. Objectives should focus on both the 'what' and the 'how' (in alignment to Northumberland County Council Values, Leadership Behaviours and Nolan Principles). The onus for writing the draft objectives should be on the Executive Director and agreed in principle with the Chief Executive in their performance expectations and objective setting meeting, at the start of the performance year.

b. Regular Performance Conversations

The Executive Director and Chief Executive should hold regular performance conversations throughout the performance year. As a minimum these should be 6 monthly.

These performance conversations provide an informal opportunity to reflect on the role of the Executive Director; what has been done well; what could have been done better; the major issues over the period ahead; and any development opportunities.

Objectives should be discussed to determine whether they should be revised in light of changing priorities.

As part of these conversations, account should be taken of how the Executive Director demonstrates the standards of behaviour set out in the Northumberland County Council Values, Leadership Behaviours and Nolan Principles.

c. Mid-year Check

The Chief Executive will undertake a mid year discussion with the Executive Director. The outcomes of which will be recorded.

The performance of the Executive Director must be assessed by taking account of both 'what' they have achieved and 'how' they have achieved it. A judgement should be made as to what extent objectives have been fulfilled to date, using the following criteria:

- 'What' they have achieved - whether objectives are on track to be met or not, and to what degree;
- 'How' they achieved it - the degree to which they have demonstrated Northumberland County Council's leadership behaviours;
- Demonstration of Northumberland County Council's values and the Nolan Principles. All members of the senior management team are expected to exemplify these values; and
- Additional consideration should also be given to the degree of difficulty or ease of meeting the objectives in light of actual events.

When assessing these objectives, equal weight will be given both to 'what' and 'how' these objectives were achieved to ensure a balanced focus on delivery and behaviours.

The Chief Executive should consider the Executive Director's views carefully and decide, in advance of the interim appraisal interview, whether they agree with them or whether they wish to add, delete, change any of them.

d. End of year Formal Appraisal

The Chief Executive will undertake a year-end appraisal discussion with the Executive Director ideally within the first two weeks of each April. The outcomes of which will be recorded.

The performance of the Executive Director must be assessed by taking account of both 'what' they have achieved and 'how' they have achieved it. A judgement should be made as to what extent objectives have been fulfilled using the following criteria:

- 'What' they have achieved - whether objectives have been met or not, and to what degree;
- 'How' they achieved it - the degree to which they have demonstrated Northumberland County Council's leadership behaviours;
- Demonstration of Northumberland County Council's values and the Nolan Principles. All members of the senior management team are expected to exemplify these values; and
- Additional consideration should also be given to the degree of difficulty or ease of meeting the objectives in light of actual events.

When assessing these objectives, equal weight will be given both to 'what' and 'how' these objectives were achieved to ensure a balanced focus on delivery and behaviours.

e. Identify developmental requirements

Formal performance reviews should also identify the professional development necessary to equip the Executive Director with the requisite skills and leadership behaviours to meet their objectives both now and in the future.

Progress against the development objectives will be discussed as part of the mid-year and year-end appraisals.

Subject to Approval

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Northumberland
County Council

**HUMAN RESOURCES
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Probation Period Policy

Version	V3
Policy Sub-group & approval date	3 September 2020
Date ratified by Joint Consultative Committee	13 October 2020
Name of policy author	Karen Bowes
Date issued	October 2020
Review Date	September 2023
Target audience	All newly appointed employees (including Apprentices)

History of previous versions of this document:

Approved Where	Approved When	Version	Issue Date	Review Date	Contact Person
Sub Committee	October 2015	V1	October 2015	October 2018	Paul Brooks
Joint Consultative Committee	October 2018	V2	November 2018	October 2018	Karen Bowes

Statement of changes made in most recent version:

Version	Date	Description
V3	August 2020	<p>Page 4 - Policy aims and purpose updated to clarify who the policy impacts on.</p> <p>Section 3. 1 - Added more detail around purpose and responsibilities for monitoring against the policy</p> <p>Sections 3, 4 & 6 - References added to include monitoring of progress towards required learning associated to recognised programmes including apprenticeships</p> <p>Section 7.2 - Guidance added around notification period for hearing</p> <p>Section 8 - Updated to provide clarity around the final probation review hearing. Link added to guidance around the hearing and appeals process and associated appendices reworded.</p>

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HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title	PROBATION PERIOD POLICY	Reference Number HRP-31-V3
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Operational Summary

The Council is committed to helping all employees to achieve optimum levels of performance.

The probationary period is a key element in the induction of new employees. It allows new employees to adapt to their new working environment and discuss their performance with their manager. It enables managers to review and assess the employee's progress on a regular basis in the early stages of their appointment.

Good performance should be recognised and praised; and causes of poor performance should be identified so they can be tackled promptly with the appropriate support.

The focus of the probationary period should be to ensure that a new employee has been given the necessary support and training to carry out their role to the required standards. However, if after being given appropriate support employees are unable or unwilling to adapt to the working methods of the Council, their employment may be terminated.

Policy Aim/Purpose

The policy aims:

- To ensure that the probation process is undertaken for all staff and is applied in a fair and consistent manner, within a supportive framework and in line with employment legislation requirements.
- To ensure the Council is provided with an opportunity to assess the skills, conduct, capability and attendance of new staff before deciding whether or not to confirm their appointment.
- To identify the link between induction, probation and developmental processes and emphasise the need for all to underpin the support and development of a new member of staff.

This policy is aimed at all new employees who will be subject to a minimum probationary period of 6 months. This includes both permanent and temporary employees, including Apprentices. Employees who transfer to a new role within the organisation will not be subject to the policy, unless they are within their first 6 months of employment. This policy will also apply to employees who have transferred from another Local Authority, or any other organisation covered by the Redundancy Protection Modification Order (RPMO).

This policy does not apply to those in Education Establishments with full delegated powers.

Employees who provide care in children's residential units will be subject to separate procedures under the recommendations of the Warner Report – "**Choosing with Care**".

Policy Title: Probation Period

Version: V3

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Policy Author: Karen Bowes

(Created: August 2020; September 2023)

Please note that when an employee who is employed on a temporary contract successfully completes a probation period, they do NOT become a permanent employee by virtue of having completed the probationary period.

Policy Summary

All new employees to the County Council including those with continuous previous local government service who are joining from another Local Authority, or re-entering Local Government, will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months if employed on NJC or Soulbury terms and conditions of service, or 1 year if employed on JNC for Youth and Community Workers.

This policy also applies to community and voluntary controlled schools and is recommended for adoption by the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools. However, staff employed under Teachers' Pay and Conditions of Service, NFRS employees on Grey Book Terms and Conditions, and staff on JNC Chief Officer terms and conditions of service have their own schemes that are different, and this policy does not apply to them. In addition, those transferred to the County Council under TUPE arrangements will not be subject to probationary arrangements unless they are already subject to them at the time of transfer.

What it means for staff

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all new entrants 'probationers' are effectively monitored and supported through a probationary period to allow them sufficient opportunity to demonstrate that they are suitable to be confirmed in their appointment. They need to be supported and objectively assessed from commencement so that any problems are resolved within the first 6 months and where resolution is not possible the appropriate and timely action is taken.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for managers to monitor and support the progress of new employees in the early stages of their employment. It will also enable managers to deal promptly and fairly with any apparent shortcomings in a new employee's (probationers') work performance or conduct in accordance with the procedure outlined below.
- 1.2. A probationary period includes a series of one-to-one meetings to ensure regular two-way communication between the line manager and the new employee, allowing timely action to be taken on any potential problems that might arise in the crucial early stages of the employment.
- 1.3. In normal circumstances, employees will receive a probation review meeting at the end of the second and fourth months and then a final review at the end of the fifth month; in some circumstances the probationary period may be extended.
- 1.4. However, an employee's employment may be ended at any stage during the probationary period in exceptional circumstances.

1.5. This policy must be applied fairly to all employees irrespective of disability, gender, gender identity or gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status, women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure all new entrant 'probationers' are effectively monitored and supported through a probationary period to allow them sufficient opportunity to demonstrate that they are suitable to be confirmed in their appointment. They need to be supported and objectively assessed from commencement so that any problems are resolved within the first 6 months or identify where resolution is not possible.
- 2.2. The Council aims to secure equality of opportunity in all its activities, and in this respect, the probation process must be objective, clear, transparent and free from discrimination. Managers need to have undertaken equal opportunities training; if in any doubt, the Manager should contact their HR advisor for clarification or advice.
- 2.3. The probation process should work alongside the induction process to help create a positive and supportive working environment, allowing new staff to settle into the organisation and learn the key elements of the job within a reasonable and realistic timescale.
- 2.4. As part of their induction and ongoing supervision, new members of staff will be made aware by their line manager of the performance standards expected of them and will be given support, training and feedback necessary to achieve these standards. Line managers will use the probationary period to monitor the success of the new staff member in reaching these standards.
- 2.5. Clear, comprehensive and accurate records of probation review meetings must be maintained, including how standards are set, what methods are used for measuring them and what timescales are given for reaching them. A Probation Review Form is provided for this purpose and must be signed by the employee and his/her line manager at each review point to provide a formal record of the probationary period and a copy given to the employee. Induction materials may be used to inform the initial probation review meeting i.e. to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee in line with their terms and conditions of employment, their job description and the policies and procedures which must be followed.
- 2.6. In circumstances where problems arise during a period of probation, the line manager should raise these with the member of staff in a timely manner, and the member of staff must be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. Line Managers should discuss the action required by the member of staff to address the problem and where necessary give clear, unambiguous warnings if standards are not met. The manager should use the Probation Review Form to keep a record of the discussion and any performance improvement objectives set. The manager should ensure that this is signed by both parties (i.e. the line manager and the employee) and a copy given to the employee.
- 2.7. Members of staff have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at any formal meetings held to address serious performance issues that have arisen during probation and where dismissal is a possible outcome. This right will not apply

in the case of informal discussions between the employee and line manager or at the normal probationary review meetings.

2.8. Documentation relating to staff will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and related documentation will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 as appropriate.

3. Duties

3.1. Role of Line Manager

The probationary period must be properly planned and managed in order that it is effective. The Line Manager must ensure that new employees are given a proper induction to the Council or school and also a proper induction into the role to which they are appointed. Arrangements for the induction of NCC employees are set out in the [Induction Policy](#). The Line Manager should provide training, instruction, guidance and reasonable assistance in settling into a new job.

3.1.1 Managers need to:

- explain the purpose of the probationary period;
- give clear guidance on expected standards of work and conduct from the outset;
- provide appropriate training and resources;
- review and document progress on a regular basis (at least once a month); and
- confirm when probation has been successfully completed;
- diarise probation reviews in advance.

3.1.2 Review meetings with the employee should be both constructive and supportive, giving the opportunity to discuss the employee's performance so far. Standard letters have been created to help the line manager manage the process and keep the employee informed. If there are any apparent issues, the manager and employee should decide jointly what action might help to resolve them. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be referred to Human Resources for advice.

3.1.3 All aspects of performance should be carefully monitored, good work acknowledged, shortcomings highlighted and the need to improve made clear and supported by full documentation.

3.1.4 It is important that the manager makes every effort to help a new employee achieve a satisfactory level of performance. NCC managers should refer to the [Induction Policy](#) and [Learning and Development Policy](#) when considering training, knowledge and skills requirements for new employees.

3.1.5 The probationary process set out in the policy must be followed to ensure that the probation arrangements work effectively. It is the managers' responsibility to ensure that this process is adhered to.

3.1.6 Managers must pay due regard to the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Adequate support must be provided to ensure disabled employees have an equal opportunity to achieve a satisfactory level of performance.

3.2. Role of Authorising Officer

3.2.1 The Authorising Officer (the Line Manager's Line Manager) or Head Teacher should ensure that any probationary periods within their service are correctly adhered to and that new employees receive adequate guidance and training to perform the role to which they have been appointed.

3.3 Role of the Employee

3.3.1 Demonstrating the standards expected by Northumberland County Council for performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and to raise any difficulties with the line manager.

3.3.2 Engage positively with the probationary process and use the opportunity to raise any issues, concerns or support and learning needs with their line manager.

3.4 Role of Human Resources / Learning & Organisational Development

3.4.1 It is the responsibility of the HR/OD Team to:

- monitor and ensure compliance with the policy; advising line managers when the requirements of the policy are not being met
- provide advice, support and guidance to all parties on the application of the policy
- ensure that the induction policy and procedures enhance and compliment the probation policy providing clarity of expectations and responsibility
- ensure that the corporate training programme contains courses of suitable content and frequency to enable all new employees to access statutory/mandatory training within the probationary period
- regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that staff affected have the support they require to deal with their situation
- Monitor probation cases to identify trends and ensure that disproportionate impact on any particular group is highlighted and addressed.

4. Probation Progress Review Meetings and Report Forms

4.1. Progress Review Meetings

- 4.1.1 If a probation period is to be of any value, it must be properly managed. Sample letters and review report forms have been provided to support the line manager in executing this policy.
- 4.1.2 Progress Review meetings must be held **during the second and fourth month** of employment. It is not necessary however or appropriate to delay action until the review meeting where a serious shortcoming/concern has been identified within the 6 months period.
- 4.1.3 The purpose of the meeting is to review performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas where they are falling short. Examples must always be provided.
- 4.1.4 Where all aspects are satisfactory, the Line Manager should inform the employee of this fact and set a date for the next progress review meeting. Good performance should be noted, and appropriate praise and positive feedback should be given for achievements to date (Appendix 5 - Letter 2)
- 4.1.5 If there are any shortcomings or difficulties then these should be made clear to the employee along with the appropriate steps needed to improve standards over the remaining probation period.
- 4.1.6 Where there are concerns regarding any aspect of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance or ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme), the Line Manager must:
- Discuss the areas of performance that need improvement.
 - Explain the standards required.
 - Devise an improvement plan which sets objectives and targets and identifies any additional support, training or guidance needed.
 - Advise the employee that failure to meet the required standards may result in termination of employment.

4.2 Probation Report Forms

- 4.2.1 The Line Manager should complete a probationary report form in detail, at each of the review meetings using the sample templates (Appendices 1, 2 & 3).
- 4.2.2 A copy of the probation report form should be given to the employee and also be sent to Human Resources to be stored on their personal file.

4.3 Final Review Meeting

- 4.3.1 The final probation review meeting must be held during the **fifth month** of employment. The purpose of the meeting is to review performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance and ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) and constructive feedback should be given to the employee highlighting both achievements and any areas where they are falling short. Examples must always be provided. (Appendix 3).
- 4.3.2 The manager must deal with any unsatisfactory performance as it arises, and not wait until the final review meeting.
- 4.3.3 The manager is responsible for taking action to deal with unsatisfactory performance promptly – dealing with problems at an early stage means that they are more likely to be dealt with successfully.
- 4.3.4 If at this meeting it is evident that the employees' performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence, attendance or ongoing progress in relation to completion of learning (when required as part of an agreed programme) is still causing concern, the line manager must advise the employee that either there will be an extension to the probation period or that they will be invited to attend a hearing meeting to discuss the termination of their employment.
- 4.3.5 Any support or assistance identified will continue to be offered during the whole of the probation period up to the date of confirmation in post or decision to dismiss.
- 4.3.6 At the end of the probation period there are three possible outcomes:
- i. Confirm the appointment (Appendix 10)
 - ii. Extend the probationary period (Appendix 11)
 - iii. Dismiss the employee (Appendix 12)

5. Confirming the appointment

- 5.1 If the employee demonstrates that all aspects of their performance are satisfactory the line manager should write and confirm their appointment at or about the six-month date following their appointment (Appendix 10).
- 5.2 Any concerns about conduct or performance must be resolved before permanent employment is confirmed.

6. Extending the Probationary Period

- 6.1 The probation period is for 6 months. During this time managers must ensure that feedback is given to employees on a regular basis and that any performance or conduct issues are resolved within this period.

- 6.2 In exceptional circumstances the probationary period may be extended for a further specified period of not more than 3 months. The justifiable reasons for extending a probationary period are:
- i) Where there is a good reason why it has not been possible to assess an employee's performance during the initial probation period of 6 months, for example the employee has been absent for a significant proportion of this period, or
 - ii) Where the required improvement has not been made, but where further time, for example to attend appropriate training and learning, will allow such improvement to happen, or
 - iii) Where insufficient progress has been made in relation to the completion of required coursework and / or learning (when recognised as a requirement of a specific programme e.g. apprenticeship, graduate placement) or a professional qualification required for the role
- 6.3 Where an employee is absent for a substantial part of their probation period, for example, due to sickness, the Line Manager may consider recommending extending the probation period for up to 3 months. This will enable the employee's actual work performance in the job to be assessed over a reasonable length of time. Each case should be considered on its merits where the length of absence is extensive during the probationary period, as this may lead to a potentially difficult situation in assessing and reporting on the employee. (Appendix 14).
- 6.4 If the probationary period is to be extended the employee must be informed of the reasons for the extension and the period of extension should be specified. This must then be confirmed in writing and a copy placed on the employees personal file (Appendix 11).
- 6.5 Where a probation period is extended the manager will hold regular, for example weekly or fortnightly review meetings with the employee to continue to assess their performance. Notes must be made of discussions had at these meetings and retained on the employee's personal file.
- 6.6 Managers must ensure that any extension to the probationary period is for reasonable and justified reasons. Advice from Human Resources must be sought if there is any doubt about the reasonableness of the extension.

7. Procedure for Ending Employment in the Probation Period

- 7.1 If at the final review meeting it is agreed that the employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence or attendance is not satisfactory and the Line Manager does not consider that an extension to the probation period would be beneficial, the employee should be invited to attend a hearing with a manager with delegated authority to dismiss, to discuss the termination of their employment (Appendix 12). In the case of Schools, the manager with delegated authority to dismiss may be the Head Teacher (where the School Governors have awarded delegated authority to the Head Teacher) or it may be the Board of Governors.

- 7.2 The employee concerned will be notified in writing of the requirement that they attend a hearing, and they will be given a minimum of 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the hearing. The employee should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied if so desired a trade union representative or a work colleague. The purpose of the hearing will be to explain the reasons for their proposed dismissal (i.e. unsatisfactory performance) and the employee will have the opportunity to respond if they wish.
- 7.3 The hearing should take place in private, and the manager should have fully prepared for the meeting. For example, have records of probationary review forms, supervision and discussion notes, improvement plans, training courses etc to hand where applicable. The employee's line manager should be in attendance. Copies of this documentation will accompany the notification of hearing letter sent to the employee.
- 7.4 At the hearing, the line manager should clearly state the reason for the hearing taking place and outline their concerns about the employee's performance and the support that has been provided to help the employee achieve an acceptable level of performance.
- 7.5 The employee should then be given the opportunity to respond. If the employee is not able to give a reasonable explanation for their continued poor performance, the manager may take the decision to dismiss.
- 7.6 The decision to dismiss must be confirmed in writing (Appendix 13). The letter should also advise the employee of their right of appeal to the Executive Director of HR and OD.
- 7.7 Where the employee is dismissed Northumberland County Council's standard notice periods apply. Therefore, an employee dismissed during their probationary period would be entitled to one month's notice unless they were SCP 40 or above where a 3 months' notice period would apply.
- 7.8 Employees have the right of appeal against dismissal and appeals should be sent, in writing, within 10 working days to the Executive Director of HR and OD, Northumberland County Council, Morpeth, NE61 2EF.

8. Appeals Against Dismissal

- 8.1. Appeals against dismissal will be heard by a nominated Senior Manager (Procedures for Hearings and Appeals - Appendix 1 Disciplinary Policy).
- 8.2. The employee should be informed that they may be accompanied at this meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague.
- 8.3. Also present at this meeting will be a HR Adviser and the manager with delegated authority to dismiss.

9. Monitoring and Audit

- 9.1 The Council will monitor the application of this policy and has discretion to review it at any time through the appropriate consultation mechanisms.
- 9.2 Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and development of this policy lies with the Executive Director of HR and OD.

10. Training and Support

- 10.1 All managers involved in the operation of the policy will receive the appropriate training, advice and support from their HR Advisor regarding both practical and procedural issues.

11. Associated Documentation and References

Reference	Title
HRP-23-V2	Induction Policy (covering NCC employees)
HRP-11-V2	Learning & Development Policy (covering NCC employees)
HRP-09-V2.1	Procedures for Hearings & Appeals (Appendix 1)
Appendix 1	Probationary Report Form 1 (2 Months)
Appendix 2	Probationary Report Form 2 (4 Months)
Appendix 3	Probationary Report Form 3 (Final Review Report)
Appendix 4	Invitation to First Probation Review
Appendix 5	Advising of Outcome of First Formal Review Meeting – Satisfactory Progress
Appendix 6	Advising of Outcome of First Formal Review Meeting – Unsatisfactory Progress
Appendix 7	Progress Review – Improvements Made
Appendix 8	Progress Review – No Improvements Made
Appendix 9	Invite to Final Review Meeting
Appendix 10	Outcome of Final Review – Confirmed in Role
Appendix 11	Outcome of Final Review – Extension of Probationary Period
Appendix 12	Outcome of Final Review – Formal Probation Hearing
Appendix 13	Outcome of Dismissal Meeting
Appendix 14	Extension to Probation Period Due to Absence through Illness



Northumberland County Council

PROBATIONARY REPORT 1

CONFIDENTIAL

FIRST FORMAL REVIEW – TWO MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

Employee's Name:

Position/Job Title:

Date of appointment:

Manager's Name:

Date of 1st Review:

Guidance Notes

1. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.
5. The date of the next review should be agreed at the meeting.
6. A copy of this form should be retained by you to refer to at the next review.

CONFIDENTIAL

TWO MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

Section 1.

This section gives you the opportunity to review any key points or issues identified during the probationary period. (An action and improvement plan should be completed to help monitor progress).

1. Assess the employee's performance in relation to the duties for the post (use the job description & person specification to compare).
2. Give details of the employee's approach to their work, including motivation, commitment, and their relationships within the work setting and with other agencies.
3. Give details of timekeeping, attendance and sickness.
4. Give details of training already undertaken.
5. What further learning & development needs have been identified? Give full details.
6. Employee comments / feedback to manager

Manager Signature:.....

Date:

Employee Signature:.....

Date:

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the first formal review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employee's personal file.



Northumberland County Council

PROBATIONARY REPORT 2

CONFIDENTIAL

PROGRESS REVIEW - FOUR MONTH PROBATIONARY REPORT

Employee's Name:

Position/ Job Title:

Date of appointment:

Manager's Name:

Date of 1st Review:

Date of 2nd Review:

Guidance Notes

1. The key points from the last assessment must be identified in section 1 of this form.
2. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.
5. The date of the next review should be agreed at the meeting.
6. A copy of this form should be retained by you to refer to at the next review.

Section 1.

This section gives you the opportunity to review any key points or issues identified at the last review meeting and comment on progress and improvements made.

Key Points/Issues	Manager Comments	Employee Comments
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Section 2.

This section gives you the opportunity to identify any outstanding performance issues and detail what action you will take to deal with them (an action and improvement plan should be completed to help monitor progress). If there are no outstanding issues leave blank.

ISSUE	ACTION

Manager Signature:..... Date:

Employee Signature:..... Date:

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the formal progress review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employee's personal file.



Northumberland
County Council

PROBATIONARY REPORT 3

CONFIDENTIAL

FINAL REVIEW PROBATIONARY REPORT

Employee's Name:

Position/ Job Title:

Date of appointment:

Manager's Name:

Date of 1st Review:

Date of 2nd Review:

Date of Final Review:.....

Guidance Notes

1. Complete all sections in full.
2. The contents of this report must be discussed in full with the employee.
3. Your comments must be objective and based on fact.
4. Evidence must be provided to support the decision
4. Once completed a copy of this form should be filed on the employee's Personal File.

Section 1 Overall Assessment

This section gives you the opportunity to provide an assessment of the employee's overall performance during their probation period.

Review Decision

Has the employee successfully completed their probation period? (please delete as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	Yes - Satisfactory Probationary Performance
<i>If Yes, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review – Confirmed in Role.</i>	
Comments and evidence of satisfactory performance:	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	No - Unsatisfactory Probationary Performance (Extension Required) If extending for how long?..... Months Date of planned final review following extension Date...../...../.....
<i>If No and extending the probationary period, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review – Extension.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	No - Unsatisfactory Probationary Performance (Dismissal Hearing)
<i>If No, you must arrange for the appropriate letter to be sent to employee confirming the Outcome of Final Review and the requirement to attend a Formal Probation Hearing.</i>	
Comments and evidence of unsatisfactory performance:	

Manager Signature:.....

Date:

A Confidential letter advising of the outcome of the final review meeting should be sent to the employee and a copy retained on the employees personal file.



Northumberland County Council

INVITATION TO EMPLOYEE - FIRST PROBATION REVIEW

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome you to the team.

As I explained at our induction meeting, the first 6 months with the Council are your probation period. The purpose of a probation period is to give the Council the opportunity to assess a new employee's suitability in the role they have been appointed to and for the employee to demonstrate their ability to effectively perform their duties and demonstrate the standard of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance that we expect.

During your probation period we will meet at 2 months and 4 months to formally review your progress against the requirements of your job and also your conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance.

Any training and support required will be in place to assist you in reaching the required standard and our review meetings will provide an opportunity to identify any further training or support you may need.

Our first formal review meeting will be held on (*insert date, time, location*) and if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide in the meantime, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland

County Council

ADVISING OF OUTCOME OF FIRST FORMAL REVIEW MEETING – SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

FIRST PROBATION REVIEW MEETING

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our first Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(insert date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that you had achieved the standards I expect you to have reached in performing the duties of your role and for your conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance.

I am very pleased with your progress to date; however, I do expect you to maintain this standard of performance throughout the remainder of your probation period.

We will meet for a Further Review Meeting on *(date, time, and location)*.

Congratulations on progress so far and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland

County Council

ADVISING OF OUTCOME OF FIRST FORMAL REVIEW MEETING – UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

FIRST FORMAL PROBATION REVIEW MEETING

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our first formal probation review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

I explained to you at our meeting that your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* is unsatisfactory and that I have the following concerns:

- *(List areas of concern with specific examples and how this falls short)*

We discussed the level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* I expect you to reach and in order to support you to meet the required level, we have agreed the following:

- *(List specific actions agree, e.g., training, extra supervision, what the employee needs to do, how and when you are going to measure performance)*

I am enclosing the action plan to be put in place in order to support you in meeting these expectations.

I am satisfied that having discussed these concerns with you, explained the standards required and having an agreed action plan in place, you have the framework and support to help you achieve the required level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)*. However, I must remind you that failure to meet the expected standards by our next formal meeting may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

We have agreed to meet to review progress *(at, date, location)*, however, if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide during this time, you must let me know.

Yours sincerely

Policy Title: Probation Period

Version: V3

Page 24 of 34

Policy Author: Karen Bowes

(Created: August 2020; September 2023)



Northumberland County Council

TO EMPLOYEE RE PROGRESS REVIEW – IMPROVEMENTS MADE

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

PROBATION REVIEW: REVIEW MEETING

Following our meeting held on (*date*) to review progress against the action plan put in place to address concerns regarding your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) in your role, I am pleased to confirm that you have now achieved the expected level of (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*).

We will meet for a Final Probation Review Meeting/Further Review Meeting on (*date, time, and location*) to review your continued progress. I must remind you that failure to maintain your improved performance by our next meeting may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

I am pleased to acknowledge the commitment you have shown in achieving the improvement plan and reiterate that you must consistently continue to perform at this acceptable level.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland

County Council

TO EMPLOYEE RE INFORMAL STAGE REVIEW – NO IMPROVEMENTS MADE

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

PROBATION REVIEW: REVIEW MEETING

Following our meeting held on (*date*) to review progress against the action plan put in place to address concerns regarding your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) in your role, I am disappointed that you have failed to make adequate progress against the action plan.

The specific concerns:

- (*list concerns with specific examples of where performance falls short*)

We will continue to review your progress against the action plan and if there are any other areas you have identified where we can offer you additional support or training you must let me know.

We will meet for a Final Probation Review Meeting/Further Review Meeting on (*date, time, and location*) to review your continued progress. I must remind you that failure to have improved your (*performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate*) may result in an extension to your probation period or dismissal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland
County Council

INVITE TO FINAL REVIEW MEETING

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

FINAL PROBATION REVIEW MEETING

In line with the Council's Probation Procedure I am writing to invite you to a final Probation Review Meeting to be held (*date, time, location*).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland County Council

OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – CONFIRMED IN ROLE

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final formal probation review meeting held on (*date, location*).

At our meeting I was delighted to advise you that you had attained the standard required in your role. You have therefore satisfactorily completed your six month probation period.

Your performance will now be discussed and monitored as part of regular 1:1s and supervisions in addition to the appraisal processes.

Congratulations once again.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland County Council

OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – EXTENSION

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that it is a requirement of the Council's Probation Policy that employees meet a satisfactory level of *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in their role. At the present time you are not meeting the level required in *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* and as a result of this shortfall I am currently unable to confirm you in your post.

I believe that with some additional training/support you will achieve these standards in the near future. I have therefore decided to extend your probation period *(time period - up to three months)*. I will meet with you at the end of the extension period to review progress. If your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* is acceptable you will be confirmed in your post. If progress is not acceptable, then the potential outcome could be dismissal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter and if there is any further help or assistance either I or the Council can provide in the meantime, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland County Council

OUTCOME OF FINAL PROBATION REVIEW – FORMAL PROBATION HEARING

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am writing to confirm the discussions of our final Formal Probation Review meeting held on *(date, location)*.

At our meeting I advised you that it is a requirement of the Council's Probation Policy that employees achieve a satisfactory level of performance in *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in their role. As you are aware, I consider your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* as unsatisfactory and as a result of this shortfall I am unable to confirm you in your post.

I am therefore inviting you to a Probation hearing to be held on *(date, location)* with *(manager with authority to dismiss)* to discuss your continued employment. As this is a formal hearing which may result in your dismissal you have the right to be accompanied by a Council work colleague, recognised trade union officer or recognised trade union representative. Also present will be *(name)* HR Adviser. I enclose for your information a copy of the relevant documentation provided by your line manager.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland County Council

OUTCOME OF DISMISSAL MEETING

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

FORMAL PROBATION HEARING

I am writing to confirm the outcome of the Formal Probation Hearing held on *(date)* which I chaired. Also present was *(name)* your representative and *(name)*, HR Adviser.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss your failure to meet the standards necessary to satisfactorily complete your probation period.

- *(outline specific concerns and support provided)*

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that that there is no case to answer and that your *(performance/conduct/timekeeping/ sickness absence/attendance delete as appropriate)* in your role meets the standards expected by the Council at this stage in your employment and you will be confirmed in role.

Or

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that I believe that with some additional training/support you will achieve these standards in the near future, we therefore agreed to an extension to your probation period *(time period - up to 3 months)*. I will meet with you at the end of the extension period to review progress; if this is acceptable you will be confirmed in post, if progress is not acceptable, then the potential outcome will be dismissal.

Or

Having considered the evidence provided at the hearing, I decided that you have been given full opportunity to reach the required level of performance and have failed to do so. My decision is therefore that you are dismissed.

In line with the Council's Probation Procedure, you are issued with one month's paid notice from the date of the hearing and therefore your employment with Northumberland County Council will end on *(date)*. You *(are/are not delete as required)* required to work your notice.

You have a right of appeal against the decision of the panel. The grounds for your appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of this letter to Kelly Angus, Executive Director of HR/OD & Deputy Chief Executive, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF .

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Northumberland
County Council

EXTENSION TO PROBATION PERIOD DUE TO ABSENCE THROUGH ILLNESS

STRICTLY PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

I am sorry to hear that you are unwell and will be absent from work for some time.

As you know, the Council operates a 6 month probation period in order to ensure that new employees to the Council have the opportunity to become familiar with the main duties and tasks of their post and to demonstrate the standards of performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance required. It also gives us the opportunity to assess your suitability as a permanent member of staff and for you to demonstrate your ability to effectively and efficiently perform your duties.

As it will be difficult for you to have the opportunity to fully prove your capability during your first 6 months of employment, I am proposing that we extend your probation period for a further 3 months.

I hope that this will alleviate any pressure you might be feeling regarding this element of your employment. I would also like to take this opportunity of wishing you a speedy recovery.

Yours sincerely

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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