

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 Tuesday 20 September 2022 at 12.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor G. Sanderson
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Dale, A.
Flux, B.
Hunter, E.I.
Purvis, M.

Simpson, E.
Watson, J.G.
Wearmouth, R.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Binjal, S.

Farrell, S.
Furnell, L.
Hadfield, K.

O' Farrell, R.
Willis, J.

Interim Director of Governance and
Monitoring Officer
Deputy Head of HR
Interim Service Director HR/OD
Democratic and Electoral Services
Manager
Interim Deputy Chief Executive
Interim Executive Director for
Finance / Section 151 Officer

One member of the press was present.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dickinson

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the open minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 15 August 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Ch.'s Initials.....

32. REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Revised Executive Management Structure

The report sought approval for the implementation of the revised executive arrangements for Council (copy attached to the signed minutes).

A number of questions were asked:-

- Councillor Dale queried whether a deputy Chief Executive would be appointed and whether it would be more appropriate for the new Chief Executive to decide on their structure once they were in place. The Leader responded that this was the structure which the Administration wanted, however, it was important for the new Chief Executive to have a role in the selection of staff. Mr O'Farrell added that a deputy Chief Executive role had been considered, but it was not felt that there was a need for a dedicated role. A six directorate structure was proposed and if it was felt that there was a need at some point to deputise for the Chief Executive, then they would nominate someone. An assistant chief executive role had also been considered, but this had been decided against as it was felt that the Chief Executive would be able to handle the full portfolio and this would also limit costs.
- Councillor Wearmouth commented that the deputy chief executive question had been raised and feedback was that this was no longer common practice. He also referred to the Caller report and the need for the Authority to be a member led organisation.
- Councillor Watson felt it was important to get the Chief Executive in as soon as possible in order to end the current temporary arrangements for staff.
- Councillor Hunter agreed that there was a need to make progress with a permanent structure asap.
- Councillor Dale asked whether the intention was to put the interim positions out to the market now. Mr O'Farrell replied that once the structure had been approved by Council, work would be finalised on the job descriptions and then the recruitment process would begin. Until new appointments were in place in about 4-6 months, then the interims would remain in place.
- Mr O'Farrell further advised members that no Chief Executive expected to have completely free rein. The Management Structure had been designed around the Administration's three key priorities, in conjunction with the Executive Team, and the Authority did need to move to a permanent structure asap following the Caller report.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revised Tier 1 & 2 structure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved. The structure will be led by a Chief Executive who will also be the Council's statutory role of Head of Paid service and will also encompass the role of Electoral Returning Officer. As agreed at the

Council's Staff and Appointments Committee on 15th August 2022, this role was currently being externally recruited to;

- (b) the Executive Director roles as below be established at Band 18. This is an equivalent number of Executive Directors that were in place prior to the current interim arrangements that came into force in September 2021. All roles below will be subject to external recruitment processes as there were no officers currently occupying substantive Executive Director roles.
- Executive Director Place & Regeneration
 - Executive Director Transformation & Resources (S 151 Officer)
 - Executive Director Adults, Ageing & Wellbeing (DAS)
 - Executive Director Children, Young People & Education (DCS)
 - Executive Director Public Health, Inequalities & Stronger Communities (DPH);
- (c) the remuneration for all the identified roles as detailed above be agreed. The salaries for these posts are set at over £100,000 and need the formal approval of the Committee and that of the full Council in line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement; and
- (d) Council be recommended to approve the revised Tier 1 & 2 structure as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Dale abstained from the vote on this matter.

33. REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF HR/OD

Appraisal Process for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers

The report sought approval to implement an appraisal process for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers in line with the guidance laid out within the JNC Handbooks for both Chief Executives and Chief Officers. (Appendix 2 & 1 respectively) (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Councillor Purvis suggested that this should be done by the Committee as a whole, which was generally supported by members. This was formally proposed by Councillor Flux and seconded by Councillor Hunter.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the appraisal process laid out within the JNC handbooks for both Chief Executives and Chief Officers Appendix 1 & 2 be agreed;
- (b) In the case of the Chief Executive, the Committee agree to the cyclical use of the 360 Chief Executive 360 Framework. A sample report was attached in appendix 3 at a cost of £1,200 per exercise;

- (c) in the case of other Executive Directors, the Committee agree to further investigation into the cyclical use of a cost effective 360 feedback tool within the appraisal process to be reported back at a future date for agreement;
- (d) the Committee agree to the annual publication of the objectives of the Chief Executive (example in appendix 4) and request that appropriate documentation be drawn up for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee. These objectives should be challenging and measurable and aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan;
- (e) the full Staff and Appointments Committee take responsibility for the appraisal for the Chief Executive as per 2.2 of the 'JOINT GUIDANCE ON APPRAISAL OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE' (appendix 2);
- (f) in the case of Chief Officers, the Committee agree that the responsibility for the appraisal sits with the Line Manager of each officer; and
- (g) documentation to support the appraisal process for both the Chief Executive and senior officers be drawn up for future agreement by the Committee.

34. REPORT OF THE: INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SENIOR HR MANAGER

Voluntary Redundancy of the Director of Transformation

The report provided the Committee with an update on the position since the last meeting on 15 August 2022 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Mrs Taylor confirmed to members that the agreement had now been signed and Council would therefore be recommended to approve the application.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended at its meeting on 21st September 2022 to approve Mrs Joynton's application for voluntary redundancy.

35. Any Other Business

Further details regarding the proposed recruitment and assessment process for the permanent Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

Members attention was drawn to the further details of the proposed process which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This was a report from the interim Director of HR/OD.

36. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

- (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 Item Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A

9	1 Information relating to any individual.
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AND The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because disclosure would adversely affect the Authority’s interests.

37. MINUTES

With regard to Minute No. 28 (Voluntary Redundancy of the Director of Transformation), Councillor Dale queried whether Mrs Joynson had begun employment with the Authority after the International business began trading as stated in the minutes. The S151 Officer advised members that the first commercial contract had been signed in December 2017 which was after she had been appointed, though there was some debate about when trading actually started. She had been appointed in April 2017.

RESOLVED that the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15 August 2022 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to this clarification.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....