



# Northumberland County Council

## **Staff and Appointments Committee**

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

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### **PREFERRED CANDIDATE APPOINTMENT PROCESS - HEAD OF PAID SERVICE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE & RETURNING OFFICER**

Report of the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Staff and Appointments Committee for the appointment of the preferred candidate as the full-time Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer and to request that the Committee makes a recommendation to full Council to appoint the preferred candidate. This report also reminds the Committee of the requirements under the Officer Appointment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment (or dismissal) of all Chief and Deputy Chief Officers.

The report also confirms and sets out the process undertaken during the exercise to recruit to the permanent position of Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer.

#### **1. Recommendations**

**To agree the following recommendations:**

- I. To receive the report and note that the recruitment process has been conducted in a fair and transparent way.
- II. To accept the findings of the Interview panel that Dr Helen Paterson is the preferred candidate to be appointed to the role of Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer.

- III. To note that the appointment is subject to no substantial and well-founded objection being notified to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with Part 4.3 of the Constitution (Officer Appointment Procedure Rules), that Dr Helen Paterson be appointed as the full-time Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer.
- IV. To agree that in the event that any objection is received from the Leader or Cabinet that appointment in question be referred back to this Committee for urgent consideration.
- V. Subject to there being no objection from the Leader or Cabinet to the appointment, to recommend to full Council that Dr Helen Paterson be appointed as the Council's Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer.
- VI. To note that the offer of employment will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks.
- VII. To note that the effective date of commencement of employment to be confirmed following all the necessary pre-employment checks.
- VIII. To agree the remuneration for the post of Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive at the rate of £199k per annum with access to staff benefits in line with all Council employees. In addition, as Returning Officer for the Council, in the event of an election, an additional fee of £12,145 will be payable.

## **2. Process and Timeline**

- On the 15th of August the Staff and Appointments Committee (StAC) agreed the appointment process of a permanent Head of Paid of Service and Chief Executive which included the Job Description (and salary range), the timetable for the recruitment process, the selection methodology and to set up the various recruitment panels. It also agreed to include the role of Returning Officer to form part of the post of Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive.
- The Committee also agreed to nominate the Chair of StAC to provide the Director of HR and OD with the names of Councillors that would form part of the recruitment and assessment process.
- At the 20th of September 2022 StAC meeting, Members attention was drawn to the further details of the proposed recruitment process (which had been circulated in advance of the meeting), in that the process will be undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair of StAC and Cllr Pattison, supported by Penna PLC, the Interim Head of Paid Service, the Interim Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer and the Interim Director of HR/OD.
- The external recruitment campaign ended on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 with a total of 15 applications being received.
- All prospective candidates were offered informal discussions with both the Leader of the Council and Interim Head of Paid Service.
- Assessment of applications was conducted by Penna PLC which resulted in applications being ranked into A, B and C categories in order of suitability for the post.

- A Long listing exercise took place on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to consider all the applications and the assessment was undertaken by Penna. 7 Candidates were longlisted.
- Between 27<sup>th</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the 7 longlisted candidates were then invited for technical interviews with both Penna PLC and Mrs Pat Richie, ex-Chief Executive of Newcastle City Council and the Chair of the independent Governance Challenge Board. Further informal sessions with the Leader and Deputy Leader were offered to all longlisted candidates.
- On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 a shortlisting meeting was held to consider the findings of the technical assessments. This process was undertaken by the Chair, Vice Chair of StAC and Cllr Pattison (invited by the Chair of StAC), supported by Penna PLC, the Interim Head of Paid Service, the Interim Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer and the Interim Director of HR/OD. A total of 5 candidates were shortlisted.
- All 5 shortlisted candidates were required to undertake psychometric assessments prior to the assessment centre which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
- During the assessment centre all 5 candidates completed the following;
  1. A presentation and question & answer session with a panel of Elected Members (panel list is attached as appendix 1)
  2. A presentation and question & answer session with Heads of Service/Service Directors (panel list is attached as appendix 1)
  3. A presentation and question & answer session with a selection of staff (panel list at appendix 1)
  4. A presentation and question & answer session with external stakeholder partners (panel list is attached as appendix 1)
  5. Complete a written exercise
  6. 1:1 meetings with the Leader and
  7. 1:1 meetings with the Interim Head of Paid Service

The marking criteria and guidelines used by each panel in bullets 1-4 above are available in attached to this report marked as appendix 2 and appendix 3. The ranking of candidates is included at appendix 4.

- Once all the activities comprising the assessment centre on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 as outlined above were concluded, a session was convened to agree which candidates should be selected to be brought forward for a final interview on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022. This involved Members who had been selected to conduct the interviews on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (see below), apart from Cllr Pattinson who was unable to attend the assessment day but participated in the interview panel the following day. All the available information was evaluated and the following pre-agreed weightings were applied;
  - Head of Service/Service Director panel - Medium multiplier score x 2
  - Members panel - High multiplier score x 3
  - Staff panel - Medium multiplier score x 2
  - Stakeholder panel - Medium multiplier score x 2

- written exercise - low multiplier score x 1
- Following the convened summary session on 18 October 2022, two candidates were invited to attend a final interview on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022. These candidates were deemed to be technically competent to undertake the role, with the final interview being held in line with the guidelines in appendix 3. The areas of assessment as with the previous days assessment panels were against 3 Principles;
  - Being
  - Supporting
  - Doing

These were devised by the Council's Strategic Organisational Development Lead in partnership with an external Chartered Psychologist to bring together into a framework the principles of;

- The Council's Values,
- The Living Leader – the Council's Leadership Development Programme; and
- The Nolan principles – otherwise known as The Seven Principles of Public Life
- The final interview panel on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 consisted of the following Councillors;
  - Cllrs Glen Sanderson
  - Cllrs Richard Wearmouth
  - Cllrs Wendy Pattison
  - Cllrs Scott Dickinson
  - Cllrs Jeff Reid
  - Cllrs Nick Morphet

Cllr Kennedy was also invited to participate for both days (the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022) however, due to unforeseen circumstances he was unable to attend.

The final interview panel were supported by

- Penna PLC
- The Interim Head of Paid Service and
- The Interim Director of HR/OD

### **3. The Preferred Candidate**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the final interview panel concluded that from the assessments laid out above, the preferred candidate is Dr Helen Paterson. This conclusion was reached following a comprehensive recruitment process and assessment of her extensive experience. The final interview panel concluded that Dr Paterson has the requisite skills to successfully undertake the role of Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive and Returning Officer. Dr Paterson's CV is attached as the confidential appendix 5.

Dr Paterson has been informed she is the preferred candidate and has indicated she would accept the appointment, should a formal offer of appointment subject to the recommendation of this Committee and full Council's approval be made.

#### **4. Statutory Obligations and Pay Policy**

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.

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 2022/2023 and sets out details, amongst other things, of the payment to chief officers.

The Staff & Appointments Committee is therefore required to consider and approve the appointments of the Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive on a salary of £199k in line with the Councils agreed Pay Policy 2022/23 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".*

In addition, one of the three roles of the Staff & Appointments Committee as set out within its terms of reference in the Councils Constitution is *"To make recommendations to Council on the appointment of the Head of Paid Service"*

#### **5. Officer Appointment Procedure Rules**

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.

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

#### **6. Members are asked to agree the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2 above.**

#### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	A permanent appointment is deemed to be appropriate in relation to finance and value for money and it is a statutory requirement that the

	Council has a Head of Paid Service in situ. The cost of the appointment can be met from existing budgets.
<b>Legal</b>	<p>The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 section 4 requires that the Council designate one of its officers as Head of the Paid Service.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to full Council.</p> <p>Other relevant legal implications have been set out in the body of this report.</p>
<b>Procurement</b>	Agreed via procurement process to commission Penna PLC to support the recruitment and assessment process.
<b>Human Resources</b>	The appointment has been made in line with appropriate employment recruitment processes. Relevant legal implications have been set out in the body of this report.
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The recruitment for this process has been in line with best practice in relation to promoting equality and diversity within the Council's recruitment processes.</p>
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Consistent with Independent Corporate Governance Review (Caller Report)
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	N/A
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The recommendations will support the health and wellbeing of Council Employees at varying levels within the organisation
<b>Wards</b>	The recommendations 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:**

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer / Interim Director of Governance	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Interim Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell in conjunction with the Interim Service Director for HR/OD
Portfolio Holder(s)	N/A

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – CEO Assessment Day - Panels

Appendix 2 - CEO Recruitment Scoring Template

Appendix 3 – NCC Leadership Framework for Executive Interviewing

Appendix 4 – Candidate Rankings

Appendix 5 – Private and Confidential Paterson CV (Redacted)

## **Background information**

20th of September 2022 Staff and Appointments report prepared by the Interim Director of HR/OD - providing further details of the proposed recruitment process.

## **Linked reports**

- Report of the 15th of August 2022 - Staff and Appointments Committee

## **Authors and Contact Details**

*This report has been prepared by HR & OD Service Director*

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