



Northumberland County Council

Staff and Appointments Committee

30 January 2023

PREFERRED CANDIDATE APPOINTMENT PROCESS - Executive Directors and Director of Corporate Law and Governance

Report of the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to confirm and set out to the Staff and Appointments Committee (StAC), the detail of the selection process to be undertaken for the following roles:

Executive Director – Place and Regeneration;
Executive Director – Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing (DASS);
Executive Director – Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities (DPH);
Executive Director – Children and Young People (DCS);
Executive Director – Transformation and Resources (s151)
Director of Corporate Law and Governance (MO)

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.

Due to the timeline of the interviews a supplementary report will be circulated following the completion of the recruitment process.

2. Recommendations

To note the following:

- I. To receive the report and note the further detail of the recruitment process that is to be conducted during the week commencing 23 January 2023.
- II. To be advised that a supplementary report, detailing recommended candidates for each role, will follow this report and will be issued following conclusion of selection exercises and on the day of the StAC meeting, Monday 30 January 2023.

3. Process and Timeline

- At the meeting of the Staff and Appointments Committee (StAC) on 15 December 2022 the appointment process for the Executive Director roles and the role of Director of Corporate Law and Governance was agreed. Also agreed were the respective Job Descriptions (and salary range), the indicative timetable for the recruitment process and the selection methodology.
- The external recruitment campaign ended on 12 December 2022 with a positive response to the adverts.
- A longlisting exercise took place on 21 December 2022 with the Leader, the interim Chief Executive, the interim Director of HR/OD and associates from Penna.
- The longlisted candidates undertook technical interviews during the first two weeks of January 2023. These interviews were conducted by Penna with the support of external specialists in the field. This exercise refined the longlist further. A meeting to discuss resulting recommendations and to determine a final shortlist is due to take place on Thursday 19 January 2023.
- All prospective candidates were offered informal discussions with the Interim Head of Paid Service.
- Shortlisted candidates will be contacted on Friday 20 January 2023 and invited to participate in selection exercises during the week commencing 23 January 2023.
- All shortlisted candidates will also be required to undertake psychometric assessments prior to their selection day.
- During the week commencing Monday 23 January 2023 a series of selection exercises will take place to determine a preferred candidate for each of the aforementioned roles.
- The schedule of the selection exercises will be as follows:

Monday 23 January	Executive Director - Place and Regeneration
Tuesday 24 January	Executive Director - Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing (DASS)
Wednesday 25 January	Executive Director - Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities (DPH)
Thursday 26 January	Executive Director - Children and Young People (DCS)
Friday 27 January	Executive Director - Transformation and Resources (s151) Director of Corporate Law and Governance (MO)

- Candidates for each role will be required to participate in a presentation and question & answer session with a panel of Senior Managers / Staff and a presentation and question & answer session with a panel of external Stakeholders. These activities will take place in the morning of the respective days detailed above. Panel membership information is available at appendix 1 attached to this report.
- Given the largely internal focus of the role, there will be no external stakeholder panel for the selection of the Director of Corporate Law and Governance (MO).

- It is fundamentally important that the input of children and young people is taken into account for the selection of the Executive Director – Children and Young People (DCS) therefore there will be an additional panel established for this role that will include young people who are or have been service users and clients of Children’s Services.
- All candidates will also undertake a 1:1 meeting with the designate Chief Executive, Helen Paterson during the morning of each day.
- Candidates for each role will then be required to participate in a cross-party elected member interview panel. The interviews will take place in the afternoon of the respective days detailed above. The panel will include Group Leaders (or their nominated deputies) and portfolio holders. Panel membership information is available at appendix 1 attached to this report. The interview panels will be supported by Penna PLC, the Interim Chief Executive, the designate Chief Executive, and the Interim Director of HR/OD.
- For the role of Executive Director - Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities (DPH), Elected Members will be joined by the Regional Director of Public Health and a Faculty of Public Health Assessor.
- At the conclusion of each day a session will be convened to agree which candidates will be recommended as the preferred candidates at the meeting of StAC on 30 January 2023. Given the tight timescales involved, details of the selection exercises and associated preferred candidates will be provided in a supplementary report made available on the same day as the StAC meeting.
- Should appointments be approved by StAC, it will be necessary to refer the appointments of Executive Director – Transformation and Resources (s151) and the Director of Corporate Law and Governance (MO) to full Council for approval due to the statutory responsibilities that they perform.

4. 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 functions as required under the Officer Appointment Procedure Rules.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	Permanent appointments to these roles are deemed to be appropriate in relation to finance and value for money. The cost of the appointments can be met from existing budgets.

Legal	StAC has been appointed to discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to Chief and Deputy Chief Officers. Chief Officers is defined as the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and any officer as defined in S2 (1) (b) (c) and (d) as in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. All other legal implications have been addressed within the body of this report.
Procurement	Agreed via procurement process to commission Penna PLC to support the recruitment and assessment process.
Human Resources	The appointments 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 X	The recruitment for this process is 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.

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 – Details of the Interview Panel memberships set out role by role.

Background information

N/A

Linked reports

- 15 December 2022 Staff and Appointments report prepared by the Interim Director of HR/OD – providing details of the proposed recruitment process.

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by the interim Director of HR & OD

Contact details:

Sarah Farrell
Interim Director of HR/OD
sarah.farrell@northumberland.gov.uk
07770 971 861

**Preferred candidate appointment process -
Executive directors and director of corporate law and governance**

Appendix 1 – Details of the Interview Panel memberships set out role by role.

NB. This list indicates those that have been invited and confirmed attendance. They are subject to change and final panel memberships, reflecting actual participation, will be issued in the supplementary report after selection exercises have been concluded.

Executive Director of Place and Regeneration – Monday 23 January 2023

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Janice Rose	Service Director – Planning and Economic Regeneration
Trevor Railton	Senior Manager - Adults
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Paul Jones	Service Director – Local Services
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Philip Soderquest	Service Director – Housing and Public Protection
Sarah McMillan	Assistant Service Director – Regeneration and Economic Development
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep

External Stakeholders:

Name	Organisation
Andy Dean	Community Action Northumberland
Graeme Binning	NFRS
Graeme Popay	National Association of Local Councils
John Johnston	Bernicia Homes
John Sparkes	NOTCA
Karen Anderson	Homes England
Martin Lawlor	Port of Blyth

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council – Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth –Deputy Leader
Cllr Jeff Reid (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Anne Dale - (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)

Cllr Colin Horncastle (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr John Riddle (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj (Portfolio Holder)

Executive Director – Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing (DASS) – Tuesday 24 January

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep
Donna Lathaen	General Manager - Adults
Karen Martin	Service Director – Adult Safeguarding
Margaret Proud	Head of Service - Adults
Rob Murfin	Interim Executive Director of Planning & Local Services
Sean Brennan	Senior Manager - Adults
Susan Ogle	Housing Operations Manager
Tracey Moore	Operations Manager - Adults

External Stakeholders:

Name	Organisation
Lynda Cox	MIND
Amy Whyte	Age UK
Dr Graham Syers	Healthwatch
Liz Prudhoe	Adapt
Paula Shandran	Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Rachel Mitcheson	ICB

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council - Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth - Deputy Leader
Cllr Jeff Reid - (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Georgina Hill (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)
Cllr Wendy Pattison (Portfolio Holder)

**Executive Director - Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities (DPH) –
Wednesday 25 January**

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep
Alan Curry	Safeguarding & Strategic Commissioning Manager
Jim Brown	Public Health Consultant
Pam Lee	Public Health Consultant
Karen Lounton	Service Manager – Registrars, Coroners and Archives
Paul Brooks	Head of NCT
Paul Jones	Service Director – Local Services
Philip Soderquest	Service Director – Housing and Public Protection

External Stakeholders:

Name	Organisation
Suzanne Lamb	Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
Abi Conway	CAB
Andrew Hetherington	Coroner
Chloe Mann	CNTW
Jim Mackey	NHCFT
Name TBC	Northumbria Police

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council – Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth – Deputy Leader
Cllr Jeff Reid - (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Anne Dale (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)
Cllr Colin Horncastle (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Jeff Watson (Portfolio Holder)

PH Representatives (to accompany Elected Members at interview)

Name
Peter Kelly – Public Health England
Ellis Friedman – Faculty of Public Health

Executive Director – Children, Young People and Education - Thursday 26 January

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep
David Street	Deputy Director of Education
Graham Reiter	Service Director Childrens
Andrea Cross	Head of Service - Adults
Paul Jones	Service Director – Local Services
Sue Aviston	Head of School Organisation and Resources

External Stakeholders:

Name	Organisation
Adrian Dougherty	SEN Parent/ Carer Forum
Brian Palmer	Founder Tharsus Group
Paul Rickeard	Diocesan Director of Education
Paula Mead	Independent Scrutineer of Safeguarding Partnership
Sally Collingwood	Headteacher and Chief Executive, Diamond Hall Academy

NB – there will be an additional presentation panel including Children and Young People.
Participant names are withheld due to confidentiality

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council – Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth – Deputy Leader
Cllr Jeff Reid - (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Georgina Hill (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)
Cllr Wendy Pattison (Portfolio Holder)

Executive Director - Transformation and Resources (s151) – Friday 27 January 2023

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep
Colin Dickson	Head of Service - Adults
Paul Jones	Service Director – Local Services
Philip Soderquest	Service Director – Housing and Public Protection
Pam Hindhaugh	Head of Procurement
Chris Thompson	Director of Information and Technology

External Stakeholders:

Name	Organisation
John Anderson	Advance
John Ritchie	NOTCA

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council – Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth – Deputy Leader
Cllr Jeff Reid - (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Anne Dale (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)
Cllr Colin Horncastle (Portfolio Holder)

Director of Corporate Law and Governance (MO) – Friday 27 January 2023

Senior Managers and Staff:

Name	Role
Alison Elsdon	Service Director – Finance
Kelly Gardner	Senior Service Director – Improvement and Innovation
Peter Judd	Trade Union Representative
Tracy Jennings	Staff Network Rep
Colin Dickson	Head of Service - Adults
Paul Jones	Service Director – Local Services
Philip Soderquest	Service Director – Housing and Public Protection
Lynsey Denyer	Senior Manager – Legal
Clare Sample	Employment Lawyer
Neil Masson	Senior Manager – Legal
Philip Hunter	Senior Service Director – Policy and Comms

Elected Member interview panel:

Name
Leader of the Council – Cllr Glen Sanderson
Cllr Richard Wearmouth –Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
Cllr Jeff Reid - (Lib Dem Group Leader)
Cllr Nick Morphet (Green Party Group Leader)
Cllr Georgina Hill (Independent Group Representative)
Cllr Scott Dickinson (Labour Group Leader)