



Northumberland County Council

Staff and Appointments Committee

20 February 2023

Chief Executive Performance Appraisal

Report of the Interim Director of HR/OD

1. **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to agree an appraisal process for the Chief Executive in line with the guidance laid out within the JNC Handbooks for Chief Executives (Appendix 2)

The report offers a defined process for appraisal for the Committee to consider and agree.

2. **Recommendations**

1. Agree the appraisal process defined in the attached appendix 1.
2. Agree that the Chief Executive's appraisal be conducted by the Leader and the Deputy Leader with administrative support from the Director of HR/OD.

3. **Background**

- The Independent Governance Review undertaken during February – May 2022 and reported to Full Council on 8 June 2022, identified the need for a robust appraisal process for the Council's Chief Executive.
- On 21 June 2022, it was resolved unanimously by Full Council that the report of the Independent Governance Review be formally received, and the findings of the Caller Review Report be accepted.
- A report was shared with this committee on 20 September 2022 outlining suggestions of how to approach a process for Chief Executive appraisal.

- At that meeting, this committee agreed to a set of underpinning principles of approach and this report seeks to conclusively define a process that is fit for purpose and takes account of JNC guidance.
- The multi-factorial recommendations agreed at the 20 September 2022 meeting of this committee have been reflected upon and JNC guidance reviewed. It has been determined that the proposals put forward are unnecessarily complex and therefore have required refinement and focus (without loss of rigour and integrity).
- Further advice has been sought and research undertaken in order to clearly define a robust appraisal process that satisfies the recommendations of the Independent Governance Review and that is fair, legally sound and pragmatic.
- In October 2022, the Council made an offer of employment to Dr Helen Paterson as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- Helen commenced employment with Northumberland County Council on 8 February 2023 and it is therefore timely that the detail of the appraisal process to which she will be subject, is shared with this committee for agreement.

4. **Issues for Consideration**

The proposed appraisal process appears at Appendix 1. In summary, the process includes the following elements and principles:

- The Leader and Deputy Leader will be responsible for conducting the Chief Executive's appraisal with administrative support provided by the Director of HR/OD.
- The appraisal will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality and promote mutual trust and confidence.
- Performance objectives will be drafted and agreed between the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive and, as is the case for all employees, will be derived from the corporate plan.
- Assessment of the achievement of objectives will be thorough and evidenced.
- Regular performance conversations will take place between the Chief Executive, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and outcomes agreed between all parties.
- A formal review meeting will take place at 6 months and a full annual appraisal at 1 year.
- A report will be made to this committee at an appropriate time to notify them that the Chief Executive's appraisal has taken place.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	
Legal	<p>The JNC Guidance on Appraisal of the Chief Executive sets out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the responsibility for appraising the chief executive lies with senior elected members. • It will be for local decision whether the appraisal should be carried out by a small committee representing all political groups or by a senior representative or representatives of the controlling group. • Appraisals should take place at least annually. • The focus of the 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 LGA, Regional Employers' Organisations, ALACE and SOLACE are potential sources of advice and assistance. <p>Under the Staff and Appointments Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee has been delegated responsibility to discharge the Council's functions of the employer in relation to the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, which includes the Head of Paid Service / Chief Executive.</p>
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"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X	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 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:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer / Interim Director of Governance	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 – JNC Guidance

Appendix 2 – Proposed appraisal process

Background information

N/A

Linked reports

20 September 2022 Staff and Appointments report prepared by the Director of HR/OD – providing details of the options for Chief Executive appraisal.

Authors and Contact Details

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

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