



Northumberland County Council

Staff and Appointments Committee

9 March 2023

PREFERRED CANDIDATE APPOINTMENT - Director of Workforce and Organisational Development

Report of the 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 the outcome of the selection process for the Director of Workforce and Organisational Development 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 details of the preferred candidate.

The Committee will recall at its meeting on 20 December 2022, that arrangements for the permanent recruitment to this role was agreed.

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 all 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).

1. Recommendations

To agree the following recommendations:

- 1) To accept the findings of the selection panels that the preferred candidate be appointed to the role of Director of Workforce and Organisational Development. 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 offers 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 Director of Workforce and Organisational Development receives staff benefits in line with all Council employees and remuneration of £96,416 per annum within pay band 16 (this cost excludes employer's national insurance and employer's pension contributions).

2. Process and Timeline

At the meeting of the Staff and Appointments Committee on 15 December 2022 the appointment process for the role of Director of Workforce and Organisational Development was agreed. Also agreed was the Job Description (and salary range), the indicative timetable for the recruitment process and the selection methodology.

Unlike the Executive Director posts, this is an appointment at the next level down in the management structure. This key difference in seniority and pay has been considered in terms of the selection and appointment process to ensure it is proportionate and focussed. The process as set out in December replicated that which was used for significantly more senior roles (Executive Directors) and it was felt that an adjustment needed to be made.

The format and process for final interview and selection was reviewed and a refinement made to the final panel comprising a panel chaired by the Chief Executive along with the Leader and the portfolio holder for corporate services (given the role is in this domain) supported by a specialist HR advisor. This provides for an improved balance of officer and member representation on the panel and for the Chief Executive to be directly involved in the process of selecting and recommending a preferred candidate for appointment to the Staff and Appointments Committee which of course retains overall control of decision making.

The assessment and selection process for the two shortlisted candidates involved the following:

- A presentation with a question and answer session with a panel of Heads of Service, Service Directors, service-specific representatives, trade union and staff network representatives.
- Individual meetings with the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- A presentation and structured interview with a panel comprising two Elected Members representing the leader and the portfolio holder and the Chief Executive to whom the role reports.

- Psychometric Assessment to gain information on candidate personality and potential suitability against the role profile. This allows the mapping of desirable values and behaviours against personality attributes and traits. The outputs were written with specific emphasis on the Nolan Principles/code of conduct and the council's values.

A summary session was conducted to discuss the outcomes of the assessment centre exercises and to evaluate candidates. These discussions included Elected Members that participated on the interview panel alongside the Chief Executive and were facilitated by the Council's recruitment partners, Penna.

3. **The Preferred Candidate**

Following the completion of the assessments set out above, the interview panel identified the preferred candidate for the role which is the current (acting up) Service Director for Human Resources and OD.

Conclusions were reached following a thorough assessment of the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience. The processes also considered candidate fit against the Council's values and the Nolan Principles. The candidate CV (confidential) is attached at appendix 1.

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

4. **Officer Employment 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 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 Procedure
Finance and value for money	Permanent appointment to this role is deemed to be appropriate and the cost of the appointment will be met from within the Council's revenue budget.

Legal	<p>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.</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> <p>All other legal implications have been addressed within the body of this report.</p>
Procurement	Agreed via procurement process to commission Penna PLC to support the recruitment and assessment process.
Human Resources	The appointment has been made in line with appropriate employment recruitment processes.
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 are not related to any particular ward but cover the County 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 – Transformation & Resources (S151)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	Helen Paterson
Portfolio Holder(s)	N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Confidential and exempt - Candidate CV

Background information

N/A

Linked reports

- 15 December 2022 Staff and Appointments report prepared by the Interim Director of HR/OD – proposed recruitment process.
- 30 January 2023 Staff and Appointments report prepared by the Interim Director of HR/OD – detailed recruitment process.

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by the HR Consultant

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