



Report To:	CHIEF OFFICERS' EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
Date:	15 JULY 2024
Heading:	ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (S151)
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	NOT APPLICABLE
Key Decision:	NOT APPLICABLE
Subject to Call-In:	NOT APPLICABLE

Purpose of Report

For the Committee to approve the arrangements for the appointment of the Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) and to approve interim arrangements for the Chief Finance Officer (S151) statutory role.

Recommendation(s)

Committee is asked to:

1. Authorise the Chief Executive to commence an external recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) as set out in the report.
2. Grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to finalise any updates needed to the job description and person specification for the role of Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) as attached to the report at Appendix 1.
3. Approve the engagement of a recruitment agency following a competitive process.
4. Approve the indicative timelines set out in the report and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to finalise dates in due course.

5. To recommend with effect from 7 October 2024 the appointment of Andrew Page, Finance Services Manager as the Interim Chief Finance Officer (S151) to Council until the commencement of the permanent Corporate Resources Director / Chief Finance Officer (S151).

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The recommendations are in line with the remit of the Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution and detailed below.

The recommendations ensure the recruitment process is commenced as soon as possible to permanently appoint to the vacant role.

The Council is required to ensure that, at all times, one of its Chief Officers has the responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs (Chief Finance Officer) pursuant to Section 151, Local Government Act 1972.

Alternative Options Considered

The recruitment process could be delayed. This is not recommended as it would not be prudent to delay the recruitment to the vacancy due to the crucial role this post plays in strategically leading, managing and delivering the functions for which the role is responsible, in particular, its role as Chief Finance officer for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

Matters which it is recommended are delegated could be retained by the Committee for decision, however, this would delay the recruitment process which is not recommended for the reasons set out above.

There is no alternative option in relation to the legal requirement to appoint a suitably qualified officer to the Interim Chief Finance Officer (S151) role to take effect immediately on the role becoming vacant (Section 151, Local Government Act 1972).

Detailed Information

The Role of the Chief Officers' Employment Committee

In accordance with the Constitution, the Chief Officers' Employment Committee is responsible for the appointment of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers. The Committee is required to:

- approve the arrangements for recruiting to Chief Officer/Statutory Officer roles (as defined in the Constitution);
- approve a job description and person specification for the role;
- interview shortlisted candidates in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- consider interim arrangements;
- recommend appointments (including interim appointments) of statutory officers to Council for approval.

It is also expected that the Committee will approve further details of the recruitment process such as advertising arrangements, the use of a recruitment agency or other advisers to the Committee and the timeline for recruitment.

Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151)

The current Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) will retire on 12 October 2024, with annual leave to be taken the last working day will be 7 October 2024. As such, the Committee is asked to authorise the Chief Executive to commence an external recruitment process for the appointment of a permanent Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151).

Job Description and Person Specification

The existing job description and person specification for the role of Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) is attached as Appendix 1. The job description includes technical and specialist knowledge based on the specifics of the role together with wider leadership competencies expected of a director and the expectation that all directors will work across the Council, leading on corporate projects alongside their functional responsibilities. The job description and person specification also contain specialist elements and qualifications in respect of the Chief Finance Officer element of the role. The job description/person specification was only recently reviewed (at the end of 2022) as part of the Decision Making Accountability (DMA) implementation and as such, no significant changes are expected, however, the Chief Executive will take the opportunity to review the job description and person specification to ensure it remains fit for purpose; in order to avoid a delay to commencing recruitment it is recommended that the finalisation of any changes will be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

In order to ensure the salary and terms and conditions for the Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) role is in line with those of similar positions a benchmarking exercise was undertaken as part of the recent DMA review. The agreed salary remains in line with the market and therefore no changes are suggested. The terms and conditions of service for the Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) post is governed by the "Joint National Councils (JNC) for Chief Officers". The Council's employment policies are also applicable.

Recruitment Agency

It would be advisable for the Council to use a specialist Recruitment Agency as part of the process to assist with a Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) search. Specialist skills which exist within HR mean that we do not require the full range of services to be provided by a Recruitment Agency. We require specialist headhunting skills and the direction of potentially suitable candidates to our employment microsite. HR staff also have skills in psychometric testing.

A process was entered into to seek three written quotations from suitable recruitment agencies. The results of this exercise and the recommended recruitment agency will be presented verbally at the meeting.

Committee is therefore asked to approve the engagement of a recruitment agency following the procurement exercise.

Indicative Timeline and Process

It is proposed that the formal external recruitment will commence as soon as Committee has given its approval to the process. Committee is asked to approve the outline timeline set out below with delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to finalise dates in due course:

- a) Approval by Chief Officers' Employment Committee – 15 July 2024
- b) Appointment of Recruitment Agency – 15 July 2024
- c) Briefing meetings to take place with the selected Recruitment Agency –17-19 July
- d) Advertisement in the relevant publication(s) and search period – w/c 29 July
- e) Closing date for applications – 18 August
- f) Longlisting – 22/23 August
- g) Longlisting interviews and testing – w/c 2 September
- h) Final interviews (COEC) – tbc
- i) Recommendation of interim appointment of S151 Officer to Council – 16 September 2024
- j) Recommendation of appointment to Council - tbc

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The use of fair and transparent policies is central to the Corporate Plan.

Legal:

The Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution delegates all employment matters to the Head of Paid Service (CEO) save for those specified in the Employment Rules in accordance with legislation (Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 4).

Where staffing relates to Chief Officers, the Head of Paid Service is required to report to the COEC the manner in which she intends for the Council's functions to be co-ordinated, the number and grades of staff required by the Authority for the discharge of their function, the organisation of the authority's staff and the appointment and proper management of the Authority's staff.

Part 3, Section 1.8 (Committee Terms of Reference) and Part 4 (Employment Procedure Rules) of the Constitution set out the remit of the Chief Officers Employment Committee in relation to the appointment of Chief Officers, the job descriptions for those roles and for recommending appointment of the Statutory Officers to Council for approval. [RLD 19/06/2024]

Finance:

The salary of the Corporate Resources Director/Chief Finance Officer (S151) is included within the Revenue Budget for 2024/25.

Costs of recruitment – The estimated costs of the recruitment agency and advertising costs will be reported to Committee. Any additional costs associated with the recruitment and interim cover will in the first instance be contained within the overall Directorate budget for 2024/25 and if this is not possible, the costs will be funded from the General Reserve. [AP 17/05/2024]

Budget Area	Implication
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General Fund – Revenue Budget	As above
General Fund – Capital Programme	Nil
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	As Above
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Nil

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
A suitable candidate cannot be identified.	This will be mitigated by the Committee proceeding as recommended. It is intended to appoint a specialist recruitment agency to undertake headhunting so that suitable candidates can be approached and directed to a microsite. The salary band recommended will also ensure suitable calibre of candidates are attracted to apply for the role.
Successful candidate needing to serve a notice period	Interim arrangements are set out in the report for Committee to recommend to Council for approval.

Human Resources:

HR will be fully involved in the recruitment and selection process. Recruitment will be open and transparent and will take place according to HR procedures. [KH 26/06/2024]

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no environmental/sustainability issues associated with this report.

Equalities:

The process which will be utilised reflects a transparent and equitable approach to recruitment.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable.

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Not applicable.

Report Author and Contact Officer

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