

Appointments Etc Panel

Tuesday, 5 September 2017, 2.00 pm, Lakeview Room

Present:

Minutes

Mr R W Banks, Mrs E Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty,
Mr A I Hardman, Ms P A Hill and Mrs E B Tucker

Available papers

The Agenda papers (previously circulated), a copy of which will be attached to the signed Minutes.

1076 Named Substitutes (Agenda item 1)

Mrs E Eyre attended the meeting as a substitute for Mrs K May.

1077 Apologies and Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Mrs K May.

1078 Election of Chairman (Agenda item 3)

Mr S Geraghty was appointed Chairman of the Panel.

1079 Election of Vice-Chairman (Agenda item 4)

Mr A I Hardman was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

1080 Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of this meeting be circulated to Members of the Panel and be signed by the Chairman in the light of any comments on their accuracy received within 7 days of their circulation.

1081 Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda item 6)

RESOLVED: that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that if they were present during such consideration it would be likely that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(I) and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to any individual and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

1082 Chief Financial Officer and Interim Arrangements (Agenda item 7)

Summary of the proceedings during which press and public were excluded (this is a fair summary of the proceedings and there are no exempt minutes)

Appointment of Interim Chief Financial Officer

The Panel noted that Sean Pearce, the current Chief Financial Officer, had tendered his resignation and was due to end his employment with the Council during October 2017. The role was a critical one for the Council, not only as part of the Senior Leadership Team but as the Officer Responsible for Financial Administration (section 151) under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The role was also crucial to the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and in ensuring it reflected and shaped the priorities of the Council.

The Panel supported the proposal that an interim Chief Financial Officer was appointed as soon as reasonably practicable to provide stability for the service and continuity to the Council as it began the process of appointing a new Chief Executive. An interim appointee would act as a nominated leader for Finance and would ensure a continued focus on the Medium Term Financial Plan in addition to maintaining the Council's statutory responsibilities.

The Panel considered options for the interim period: whether to seek an external or internal interim appointment. It was likely that an external appointment would need to be start before the end of October to ensure an effective handover from the exiting Chief Financial Officer. The new appointee would need to be brought up to speed in a very short time, which could lead to some temporary disruption and instability. The market rate for such an appointment was also likely to be more expensive than an internal interim, even taking into account the potential cost of a necessary internal backfill arrangement.

On balance, the Panel agreed that it preferred to seek an internal interim appointment. The advantages were considered to be that an internal appointment would maintain continuity, direction of travel and stability of the finance function. An internal candidate would have the advantage of understanding the current financial challenges faced by the Council and would be able to lead with immediate effect on the continued Medium Term Financial Plan. The Panel noted that this would require additional backfill arrangements to create the

capacity for the individual to act up.

In advance of the meeting the Chief Financial Officer had sought interest from among senior managers in taking up the interim role. One manager had expressed interest and, having considered the application, the Panel agreed to interview the candidate, Sue Alexander.

Having interviewed Sue the Panel agreed to offer her the interim role. This would be for up to 6 months to enable the recruitment of a permanent Chief Financial Officer. The Panel agreed to authorise the Chief Executive to offer a remuneration package based on current arrangements.

Backfill arrangements

The appointment of Sue Alexander to the interim role meant that her substantive Head of Service role was vacant.

The Panel agreed that in the role of interim Chief Financial Officer Sue could put in place interim arrangements to ensure continued service provision. It was envisaged that this would be for a period of 3-6 months while permanent recruitment to the Chief Financial Officer role took place.

Temporary Redistribution of Digital Transformation and ICT/Programme Management

During the recruitment process the potential for responsibility for Digital Transformation and ICT/Programme Management to be removed from the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer had been discussed. The current Chief Financial Officer held responsibility for this following a re-distribution of duties agreed by the Appointments Panel on 6 April 2017. It was proposed that this be re-distributed temporarily to another Head of Service.

The Panel supported this proposal and agreed that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning in discussion with the relevant Head of Service to arrange the temporary redistribution for a period of between 3 and 6 months. The Chief Executive and Cabinet Member would agree the appropriate remuneration with the Head of HR and OD in line with the relevant Council policy on "Acting up and Honorarium payments".

Permanent Recruitment to the Chief Financial Officer

It was recommended that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of HR and OD be authorised to begin a process immediately for recruitment to the permanent post of Chief Financial Officer, including all statutory responsibilities. The Panel approved the job description and person specification for this post.

The process for recruitment would include longlisting by an initial sift of applications by the Chief Executive or his nominated Director and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, supported by the Head of HR and OD and search partner. Shortlisting would then be undertaken using a robust process in order to bring a final shortlist of candidates to the Panel for interview.

Fixed Term Extension – Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Finance and Financial Recovery)

In December 2015 an Appointments etc Panel agreed to appoint Steph Simcox to the post of Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Finance and Recovery) on a fixed term basis until 31 October 2017. The role currently sat on the Children's, Families and Communities Leadership team advising on all financial matters relating to the Directorate and economy infrastructure.

To ensure continuity of service delivery and also to maintain a clear focus on improving Children's Services, the Panel was asked to agree to approve the extension of the temporary contract for a further period of 12 months until 31 October 2018. This request was considered paramount in providing the necessary continuity for the interim and permanent Chief Financial Officer role and the Panel agreed to the proposal

RESOLVED that the Panel:

- a) notes the departure of the current Chief Financial Officer in October 2017 (final date to be confirmed) and agrees to recruit to the leadership of the Finance function on an interim basis;**
- b) agrees that an internal interim appointment to the post of Chief Financial Officer be made and the post be offered to Sue Alexander;**
- c) agrees that the Interim Chief Financial Officer**

be authorised to put in place interim backfill arrangements to the role of Head of Financial Management (CFC & DAS) as per paragraphs 25-27 for a maximum of 6 months;

- d) that the Chief Executive be authorised to finalise appropriate remuneration for the interim post holder appointed by the Panel, in the light of paragraphs 29-31 of the report; and
- e) authorises the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of HR&OD, to proceed with a recruitment exercise for the permanent post of Chief Financial Officer at the earliest opportunity, including approval of the job description and the shortlisting process set out in the report, noting that appointment to the permanent post will be a decision for the Panel at a future date;
- f) authorises the extension of the contract for Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Finance and Financial Recovery) Steph Simcox, for a further 12 months until 31 October 2018;
- g) authorises the temporary re-distribution of Digital Transformation and ICT/Programme Management to another Head of Service, inclusive of appropriate remuneration as detailed in paragraphs 44-47 of the report.

The meeting ended at 3.12pm

Chairman