

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Leader of the Council

Date:	20 April 2021
Agenda Item:	12
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Key Decision?	YES
Local Ward Members	NA

Lichfield
district council

FULL COUNCIL

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A comprehensive and robust recruitment process for the role of Chief Executive has been completed but as yet has not yielded a permanent appointment.
- 1.2 Council is recommended to formally appoint to the role of Interim Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service and Chief Officer), Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council approves the appointment of Tony McGovern as Interim Chief Executive (and be designated Head of Paid Service).
- 2.2 Council approves the appointment of Tony McGovern as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 2.3 That the post be appointed to undertake an effective hand over with the current post holder and support the elections, with full delivery of the statutory role taking effect from 1 June 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 In January 2021 WM Employers were commissioned to undertake the executive search and recruitment of a new Chief Executive.
- 3.2 The campaign went live on Wednesday 3 February and closed on Friday 26 February. Candidates were sought through:
 - A bespoke microsite designed by WME <https://leadinglichfield.co.uk/> which received over **670 views from 409 individual visitors**.
 - WMJobs.co.uk which received over 1000 views of the role.
 - Online promotion and executive search through social media networks such as LinkedIn.
 - Online advertisement with MJ which received over 590 views.
- 3.3 The campaign resulted in 28 candidates applying for the position. Longlisting of the candidates was conducted by WM Employers against the published job description on the details provided in the application form and supporting statements. This process resulted in 12 candidates meeting the minimum requirements for the post and these candidates were invited to attend a technical assessment and preliminary interview with the Chief Executive of WM Employers and a technical assessor – a recently retired and well regarded district Chief Executive.

- 3.4 Following the technical assessment eight candidates were invited to attend a panel interview with Leadership team and a written exercise. This allowed a reduction of the field to four candidates who were invited to attend the Appointments Committee on 25 March.
- 3.5 All candidates were set a presentation topic and asked a series of standard questions designed to demonstrate their key skills in leading the organisation and delivering the strategic objectives effectively.
- 3.6 At the conclusion of this rigorous and detailed selection process, it was agreed to recommend to Council the appointment of one of the four as the new Chief Executive by unanimous agreement. However on reflection of the offer the successful candidate withdrew from the process citing a change in their career opportunities in their current organisation as a result of recent announcements.
- 3.7 Due to the timing of the current post holder's departure and clashes with bank holiday and election period it was felt necessary to appoint an Interim Chief Executive to allow sufficient time to consider alternate options and assess the next steps to recruiting to the permanent role. It is also felt that uncertainty due to the pandemic has led to rapid changes in the recruitment market – with many senior roles in similar organisations being available.
- 3.8 The recommended candidate for the interim position has previous experience of senior leadership roles within Staffordshire having just stepped down as Managing Director and Head of Paid Service for Cannock Chase District Council. It is considered that Tony can lead the organisation effectively through the remaining challenges from Covid 19 response and our recovery plans until a permanent appointment is made, bringing key skills and experience to the organisation.

4. Governance Implications

- 4.1 Under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended), the Council has a legal duty to appoint one of its officers as Head of Paid Service. Under the Council's constitution, this role is performed by the Chief Executive.
- 4.2 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 and the Council's Constitution provide that an offer of an appointment as Head of Paid Service must not be made until:-
- the Appointments Committee has notified the Proper Officer of the name of the person to whom it wishes to make the offer and any other particulars which the panel considers are relevant to the appointment;
 - the Proper Officer has notified every member of the Cabinet of:-
 - (a) the name of the person to whom the panel wishes to make the offer (subject to approval of the Council);
 - (b) any other particulars relevant to the appointment which the panel has notified to the Proper Officer; and
 - (c) the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made to the Proper Officer by the Leader of the Council on behalf of the Cabinet; and
- either –
- (a) the Leader of the Council has, within the period specified in the notice under sub-paragraph (c) above, notified the committee that neither he nor any other member of the Cabinet has any objection to the making of the offer;
 - (b) the Proper Officer has notified the committee that no objection was received by her within that period from the Leader of the Council; or

(c) the committee (or in the case of the appointment of the Head of Paid Service, the full Council) is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader of the Council within that period is not material or well-founded.

No such objection has been received by the proper officer.

4.3 The interim statutory appointment will be made for a period of up to 6 months on a fixed term contract.

Alternative Options	Members can decide not to appoint the interim candidate, however under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended), the Council has a legal duty to appoint one of its officers as Head of Paid Service. Under the Council’s current constitution, this role is performed by the Chief Executive. We also have a legal duty to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.										
Consultation	The appointment has been carried out and recommended by the Appointments Committee made up of Cabinet members, the Leader of the Cabinet and Leader of the Opposition. Stakeholder engagement with senior officers has been carried out as part of the interview process.										
Financial Implications	<p>The current approved budgets for the post of Chief Executive are shown below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="408 943 1366 1032"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£153,590</td> <td>£156,660</td> <td>£159,800</td> <td>£163,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The interim appointment will be made within the existing budget, with the potential for a marginal increase of funding required for additional handover days throughout May to support the election and effective transition, these will be met from underspends or general reserves.</p> <p>The cost of recruitment for the chief executive so far has been £23,900, which will be met from reserves.</p> <p>Interim rates outside of this direct appointment would be charged at around £1000 per day for candidates of the required skill set, so this appointment provides the best value for money.</p>		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	£153,590	£156,660	£159,800	£163,000
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	The role of Chief Executive ensures the effective delivery of our statutory obligations and strategic outcomes as set out in the strategic plan.										
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	The recruitment has been carried out with support from WM Employers in line with current recruitment practices and advertised widely. Candidate demographics were collected as part of the process to ensure participation from groups with protected characteristics.										
Crime & Safety Issues	None arising from this report.										
Environmental Impact	None arising from this report.										
GDPR/Privacy Impact Assessment	As a statutory appointment the candidate must be named publicly for members to consider.										

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	Risk Description	How We Manage It	Severity of Risk (RYG)
A	The interim appointment does not support the team effectively in the intervening period	The appointment has been made on the basis of continuing work already underway - a known candidate with an established role within the region and an effective handover will ensure continuity.	Yellow – material Likelihood – low Impact – high
B	Current work stops or slows due to the interim appointment	The interim appointment has a proven track record and understands the projects currently underway.	Yellow – material Likelihood – low Impact – high
C	Use of interim causes disruption to delivery and organisational instability	A robust process has been used to determine suitable candidates for the interim role and their brief will be to stabilise staffing and ensure continuity.	Yellow – material Likelihood – med Impact – high
D			
E			

Background documents

Relevant web links
