

19. Recruitment of Chief Operations Officer

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PLEASE NOTE: Should the Council wish to discuss the detail of Appendix 1 it will be necessary to exclude the press and public and move into exempt session. If applicable, the following resolution should be moved:

“That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.”

As advised in the original report, this report provides an update on the recruitment process and recommends the appointment of a Chief Operations Officer, with changes to the original report shown in red text. The Council is not able to make public the identity of the preferred candidate at this time but will do so as soon as practicably possible.

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COUNCIL



Report subject	Recruitment of Chief Operations Officer
Meeting date	20 February 2024
Status	Public Report (Appendix 1 – Exempt)
Executive summary	<p>This report invites the Council to approve the appointment of the candidate named in Appendix 1 to the position of Chief Operations Officer in accordance with the Council's Constitution and statutory requirements.</p> <p>Because of the timescales involved, it has not been possible to complete the recruitment process before the agenda has to be published for the Council meeting, so the details of the recommended candidate will be circulated as soon as possible and before the meeting.</p> <p>A summary of the recommended candidate's skills, experience and employment history is shown as Appendix 1 of this report.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Council approves the appointment of the candidate named in Appendix 1 to the position of Chief Operations Officer.</p>
Reason for recommendations	Constitution - Appointment of Head of the Paid Service, Chief Officers (Tier 2 Appointments), Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Vikki Slade, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Dynamic Places
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	<p>Graham Farrant, Chief Executive</p> <p>Sarah Deane, Director of People and Culture</p> <p>Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Jon Matthews, HR Business Partner</p>
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with detail of the recruitment process undertaken to source and select the candidate named in Appendix 1 for the position of Chief Operations Officer.
- ~~2. Because of the timescales involved, it has not been possible to complete the recruitment process before the agenda has to be published for the Council meeting, so the details of the recommended candidate will be circulated as soon as possible and before the meeting.~~

Recruitment Process

3. The Council's Constitution sets out the requirements for senior appointments as follows:
Article 11 - Officers - 1. Management Structure
 - 1.1. General - The Council may engage such staff (referred to as Officers) as it considers necessary to carry out its functions.
 - 1.2. Chief Officers - The Council will engage persons for the following posts, who will be designated Chief Officers:
 - (a) Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
 - (b) Directors who report directly to the Chief Executive within the line management structure
 - 1.3. The process of selection and recruitment of the above Chief Officers shall be undertaken in accordance with provisions set out in the Employment and Procedure Rules - Part 4E of the Constitution.
4. The Constitution states that Chief Officer roles should be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for them. The Chief Operations Officer role was advertised in the Municipal Journal (the MJ) and the Guardian to ensure the council attracted the widest pool of applicants.
5. The employment rules within the Constitution state that appointments will be made by the Council following a process arranged by the Director of People and Culture and in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
 - a. The selection process for the Chief Operations Officer comprised of the following:
 - i. Penna, an established executive search company for local government was selected to support the council in resourcing for the role.
 - ii. Candidates were selected from a long list of applications and attended a technical interview facilitated by Helen Bailey, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - iii. Following the technical interviews, feedback was presented to panel members who agreed the shortlist.
 - iv. Shortlisted candidates were invited to an Assessment Centre held on Tuesday 13 February where they were invited to present to the panel. Following the presentation, candidates were asked a range of competency-based questions. The panel comprised of the following:
 - Cllr Vikki Slade
 - Cllr Margaret Phipps
 - Cllr Kieron Wilson
 - Cllr Bobbie Dove (substitute for Cllr Phillip Broadhead)
 - Cllr Sara Armstrong

Advised by:

- Graham Farrant, (Chief Executive),
- Sarah Deane (Director of People and Culture)
- Bernadette MacDonald-Raggett (Independent Observer)

v. Candidates also attended a Councillor Engagement Session with the following councillors:

- Cllr Peter Sidaway
- Cllr Tony Trent
- Cllr Paul Hilliard
- Cllr Mark Howell
- Cllr Patrick Canavan

vi. As well as attending the sessions above, candidates completed a timed financial exercise and attended a networking lunch. The lunch was attended by the selection panel, members of the council's corporate management board and the operations senior leadership team.

Recommended Candidate

6. The candidate named in Appendix 1 is proposed by the formal selection panel as the recommended candidate to be offered the role of Chief Operations Officer. Council is asked to approve this appointment.
7. The recommended candidate brings with them a wealth of experience. A summary of their skills and career history is shown at Appendix 1. ~~(to be circulated)~~.

Summary of financial implications

8. There are no financial implications arising from this report, as the role is within the current establishment budget.

Summary of legal implications

9. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Summary of human resources implications

10. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

11. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

12. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

13. Candidates were assessed using objective assessment criteria. The selection process was observed by an independent observer who participated in the whole process from shortlisting through to selection.

Summary of risk assessment

14. There are no increased risks arising from this report.

Appendices

15. Appendix 1 shows the recommended candidate's skills, experience and employment history. The information is exempt - category 1 (personal information).

Background papers

16. There are no background papers associated with this report.
17. This report supersedes the paper already circulated to Council now that the assessment centre has taken place and the recommended candidate has been selected.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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