

By: Roger Gough, Leader of the Council

To: County Council

Date: 16 November 2023

Subject: Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer

Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY: This report conveys Personnel Committee's recommendation to make the temporary appointment to the post of a Chief Executive Officer for a period of 18 months.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to:

1. AGREE the recommendation from Personnel Committee to appoint Amanda Beer to the post of Chief Executive Officer for a period of 18 months to enable the recruitment to the substantive post of Chief Executive Officer and any variance subject to mutual agreement.
2. INSTRUCT the Monitoring Officer to advise on and propose changes to the Constitution to give effect to any changes agreed by this paper at this meeting.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 26 May 2022, the County Council agreed to create the post of Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of HR & OD, and consequential changes to other roles in the top tier structure.
- 1.2 Following David Cockburn's retirement, and an unsuccessful recruitment exercise for a new Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with the constitution our Deputy Chief Executive, Amanda Beer has assumed the role of Chief Executive on an interim basis.

2. The Challenge

- 2.1 Ultimately the aim is to secure a permanent, high calibre, competent, capable Chief Executive Officer to provide the strategic leadership of staff for the County Council.
- 2.2 To achieve this there are several factors to consider. Our independent professional advisers indicate that for jobs at this level in the public sector it is particularly challenging to generate significant numbers of applicants. Along with many across the country, the County Council's financial position and its current 'challenge' may be a deterrent for potential candidates. There are also the forthcoming national and county elections that add an element of uncertainty to the operating environment for KCC as an employer, particularly for its Chief Executive Officer.
- 2.3 It will therefore be necessary for the County Council to undertake a more time-consuming approach to securing a new appointee. In view of this longer time horizon as well as the considerable challenges and degree of uncertainty we face, whatever we can do to provide some stability in the short term is to our advantage. We are very fortunate to have an extremely competent Deputy Chief Executive, who is able and willing to undertake the role for a period of time, providing the ability to secure a permanent successor to be appointed.
- 2.4 This recommendation is welcomed by senior officers and Cabinet and provides some clarity and stability to address the internal and external challenges faced by the authority.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The top tier structure of the Authority is determined by the County Council as set out in the Constitution. The Personnel Committee plays an important role by making recommendations to the County Council for decision which in this context include:
 - (i) changes to the top tier structure
 - (ii) appointing Senior Managers and determining their terms and conditions.Personnel Committee at its meeting on 24 October agreed this proposed appointment and to recommend to County Council.
- 3.2 The job description for the CEO role, as agreed in 2022 is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.3 There will be no impact on any of the responsibilities or report lines of the other Statutory Officer roles.

3.4 If the County Council agree the appointment, a small number of existing top tier and senior manager roles will be directly impacted due to the temporary absence of the Deputy Chief Executive. However, there are no consequential grade changes.

4. Recruitment to the role

4.1 Work will need to continue in the pursuit of a permanent Chief Executive. A suitable timetable to resurrect the process will be designed to ensure we can generate the desired quality and quantity of candidates.

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