

Additional Urgent Item	
Report No	HC/52/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Full Council

Date: 8 December 2022

Report Title: Recruitment Process for the Chief Executive

Report By: Head of People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Chief Executive has announced her resignation with effect from mid February 2023 to take up the position of Chief Executive in Devon County Council. This report presents proposals for the recruitment process of a new Chief Executive.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a Chief Executive Appointments Panel be established with the panel members outlined in Section 5 of the report.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive post will be advertised in accordance with standard recruitment policy. The Chief Executive will not take part in the formal selection to the post. Internal advice on the process will be provided by the Head of People and any external recruitment specialist engaged specifically for this purpose. Both the Head of People and the external recruitment specialist will be involved in the candidate interview process and sit on the Member Appointment Panel in an advisory capacity. The process will be supported by Democratic Services.
- 1.4 Arrangements for appointing an Interim Chief Executive are set out in section 7.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree:
 - i. the Appointments Panel and recruitment process as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 of the report
 - ii. consideration of all administrative issues related to the recruitment should be delegated to the Appointments Panel
 - iii. that external advisers should be used set out in paragraph 6.1 and 7.1 and the

extent of this involvement should be approved by the Appointments Panel and not exceed £20k

iv. the arrangements for appointing an interim Chief Executive.

2.2 Members are asked to note the salary is £159,499 with the 2022/23 pay award pending.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource – internal HR and Democratic Services staff resource will be used to support the recruitment process. The cost of engaging an independent external advisers will be subject of a mini procurement competition to ensure best value and is expected to be in the region of £15k-£20k.

3.2 Legal – there is a requirement to have a Head of Paid Service to run the Council as indicated in the attached job specification. Therefore there is a need to identify interim arrangements which will be in place immediately the Chief Executive leaves. This will ensure key responsibilities within the Chief Executive role will be covered in addition to the Head of Paid Service including the role of Returning Officer and Emergency Planning Co-ordinator which will form part of the interim Chief Executive's remit pending a permanent appointment to the Chief Executive position.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – there are no implications arising from this report.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – there are no implications arising from this report.

3.5 Risk – there are risks to the Council if there are delays in the recruitment to the post of Chief Executive and an Interim Chief Executive.

3.6 Gaelic – there are no implications arising from this report.

4. Job Profile and Recruitment Pack

4.1 A draft job profile and person specification for the Chief Executive post has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1. It is proposed this will be submitted to the Appointments Panel for final approval.

4.2 The HR Corporate Talent Team will prepare the draft Recruitment Pack for approval by the Appointments Panel

5. Recruitment Panel

5.1 The Appointments Panel be established which involves 7 Members, comprising the Convener, the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Scottish Conservative Unionist Group, the two Senior Strategic Chairs, plus 1 further Liberal Democrat Group. The Panel is chaired by the Convener. Training will be provided for any Member who has not already been involved in an interview process. Where a designated panel member is unable to attend, a substitute should be nominated.

6. External Advisers

6.1 There are benefits in using independent recruitment advisers to undertake a wide

search for potential candidates and offer depth to the analysis of applicants' profiles. The amount of specialist support will be tailored to meet requirements such as including a head-hunter type search and marketing the recruitment campaign as agreed following a mini tendering process. The scope of the role of an independent adviser will also include preparing an evaluation of applications, facilitating a short-listing meeting, post short-listing, liaising with the Appointments Panel and the HR Talent Team to agree the format of an Assessment Centre offering such other support as is identified by the Appointments Panel. Depending upon the level of involvement, it is estimated that the cost of the external advisers would be in the region of £15-20k plus travel and accommodation costs.

7. Interim Arrangements

- 7.1 Due to the timing of the Chief Executive's leaving date in February 2023, it will be necessary to agree interim arrangements to cover the Chief Executive duties as outlined in the attached job specification. This can be covered by either undertaking an internal selection process and appointing an existing member of staff on an acting up basis or seeking an external interim appointment. Given time constraints and the urgent requirement in making an interim appointment, a smaller Appointment Panel comprising the Convener, the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition be given authority to make the interim appointment. This Panel will be supported by the Head of People and an external adviser. It is proposed an initial executive search be undertaken to seek interest from external applicants.

8. Salary

- 8.1 The salary for the post of Chief Executive of Highland Council is agreed by national negotiations. The current salary level is £159,499 as outlined in Circular CO/151 2021/22. The Chief Officer's pay negotiation is pending for 2022/23 therefore it is proposed to advertise at the current salary level which will be updated when the pay award, which is to be effective from 1 April 2022 is concluded.

Date: 6.12.22

Author: Elaine Barrie, Head of People

Background Papers: Job and Person Specification

Highland Council

Chief Executive

Job Description and Person Specification

Job Purpose

- To champion the citizens of the Highlands, its services, businesses, communities and its education; nurture and grow the Highland Council's vision of creating a strong and growing economy built on fairness of opportunity for all.
- To provide leadership to all employees throughout the organisation, underpinned by a performance management, digital and commercial ethos, and to work with partners to raise the ambition of the Highland region.
- To deliver the Council's strategic aims and objectives set out in the Council's Programme, with citizens at the centre of all that we do and that the diverse needs of our community are considered.
- To ensure that services are delivered to a high standard via effective management of the Council as a whole and through effective and efficient commissioning of Services.
- To foster and sustain trusting and long-lasting partnerships that improves collaboration and establishes the Highland Council as a leading partner in all strategic activities.
- Lead the Council in its commitment to equality and diversity and spread good practice across partners, business and communities
- To work with Members to ensure effective governance of the Council, maintain high standards and ensure the probity and integrity of decisions made.
- To undertake the role of Returning Officer and other electoral responsibilities.
- To act as principal advisor to the Council, Head of Paid Service and Emergency Planning Co-ordinator.
- To represent the Council's interests at all levels, forums and groups as agreed with the Administration and Council.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Management

- Give clear leadership and direction on the development and implementation of the Council's Programme ensuring a clear sense of ambition, direction and purpose.
- Act as a Champion and advocate for the Council at local, regional, national and international level with key stakeholders,
- Act as principal policy adviser; provide support and advice on the development of the Council's strategic aims.
- To ensure that the Council's policies and priorities are understood and implemented across the organisation.

Culture

- Promote and deliver an organisational culture that is positive, forward-looking, enterprising, results orientated and customer focused.
- Promote an environment which is supportive, fair and open, encouraging and enabling all staff to meet required performance standards, and that ensures high standards of probity, integrity and customer confidence.
- Ensure that all senior managers are role models for these behaviours.
- Encourage a real sense of ownership of the Council's ambitions and priorities.
- Promote value for money, service excellence and equality in the delivery of services and employment.

Communications

- Consolidate and enhance Highland's reputation and promote a positive image of the Council and the area.
- Lead, maintain and promote effective communications, liaison and partnership working throughout and across the Council at all levels.
- Lead strong working relationships with external stakeholders, including voluntary and community groups, and the private sector.

- Lobbying and influence with Government and other public sector agencies, to optimise opportunities and enhance wellbeing and inclusive growth across the Highlands.

Delivery

- Implement the effective delivery of Council services.
- Ensure effective collaborative working across all Council services and partnerships in order to meet citizens' needs, deliver corporate strategies and achieve local objectives.
- Ensure that the Council has effective business planning with focused delivery and action plans which link targets to service plans and commissioned services.

Performance

- Ensure that effective performance and management arrangements are in place to achieve the delivery of service excellence.
- Ensure that the council has effective programme and performance management systems in place to secure corporate priority projects on time, to budget and to a consistently high standard.
- Effective use of complex management, strategic, risk and budget information to inform decision making and drive performance improvements.

Resource Management

- Lead the management team to deliver the Council's financial strategy
- Ensure that other resources are properly planned, managed and controlled efficiently to achieve the Council's aims and objectives.

Local Democracy

- Support the Council and Members to exercise their democratic role and support open and democratic procedures.
- Promote Highland Council as a leading organisation in supporting strong governance.
- Be innovative in encouraging participation in the democratic process.

Equality and Diversity

- Demonstrate an open commitment to actively celebrating the diversity of the Highlands in our workplace and in our engagement with communities.

- Ensure that inclusion and respect is at the heart of everything the council does and personally champions both in undertaking the role of Chief Executive.
- Recognise the broader definitions of diversity and support programmes to promote social inclusion and community.

Personal Qualities

- Leadership skills – a visionary Leader with ambition, energy, drive and resilience.
- Demonstrable achievement in leading change management at a senior level within a comparable complex organisation.
- Leads from the front, an honest and straightforward style that gains the respect of others.
- Excellent communication and partnering skills which build positive and sustainable relationships.
- High standards of professional morals, integrity and corporate discipline.
- An empowering style, valuing the contributions of others and committed to staff and community development.
- An ability to deliver under pressure and to tight deadlines.
- A high level of resilience and able to respond constructively to criticism.
- A passionate commitment to service excellence and continuous improvement.
- Results focused and performance driven.
- A commitment to local democracy, social justice, equality and accountability to the community.
- Skilled negotiator with a high degree of political sensitivity, with an ability to build positive effective relationships with Elected Members.
- Personal character and credibility that commands the confidence and respect of Members, managers, staff, local communities, external partners and stakeholders.
- Ability to influence outcomes through tact, diplomacy and effective reasoning and persuasion skills on complex issues to a wide variety of audiences.

Person Specification

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Educated to degree level or equivalent with evidence of continued professional development and/or further management qualification.
- Consistent achievement at Executive level, demonstrating substantial leadership and senior management experience in an organisation of comparable scale and complexity.
- A comprehensive understanding of local government and the context within which it operates
- Strong financial and commercial awareness, with strong analytical skills and a creative approach to problem solving
- An excellent track record of building internal and external relationships which deliver and working across organisational boundaries.
- Demonstrable success in leadership and management, leading the formulation and delivery of corporate objectives, policies and strategies
- Evidence of providing sound professional advice and guidance at senior management/director/ elected member level.
- An excellent track record of effective decision making within a complex political environment
- A demonstrable record of establishing and maintaining a strong and effective performance culture, inspiring, motivating and empowering people to meet corporate objectives and deliver services that are responsive and customer-focused and achieving results.
- Extensive and practical experience of successful financial and people management within a large complex, multi-functional organisation

- Evidence of success in building, enhancing and maintaining the reputation of an organisation
- Evidence of personal leadership in achieving equality and social inclusion outcomes in employment and service delivery.
- Proven ability to organise and undertake a diverse workload, manage constant and often conflicting work demands whilst still achieving competing deadlines and targets working effectively within financial constraints.
- Excellent record in the areas of service and performance excellence.
- An ability to make the right decisions in a challenging environment and to manage conflict and resistance positively

Date 5.12.22