

ASSEMBLY

17 May 2023

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| Title: Appointment of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) | |
| Report of the Leader of the Council | |
| Open Report | For Decision |
| Wards Affected: None | Key Decision: No |
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| Accountable Director: Gail Clark, Director of Workforce Change | |
| Summary | |
| <p>The external recruitment exercise for a permanent Chief Executive started in February 2023.</p> <p>An executive recruitment microsite was created that set out the Council's vision for itself and the borough, and what it was looking for in a Chief Executive. The post was advertised in a number of ways, including through the Municipal Journal (MJ), the industry-recognised recruitment magazine for local government, and LinkedIn and brought-in expertise where required, e.g. technical assessment and support for stakeholder interviews.</p> <p>At the closing date for applications of 12 March, five candidates had applied. One applicant was deemed not to have met the necessary criteria for the post and four were invited to technical panel assessment interviews.</p> <p>The technical panel assessment interviews took place on 23 March 2023. The findings and recommendations of that panel, together with the job description and person specification for the role and the four longlisted candidates' personal statements and CVs were considered by the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel on 27 March 2023. The JNC Panel agreed to shortlist two candidates who would progress to informal meetings with key stakeholders and Cabinet Members, as well as undertaking psychometric testing, prior to final interviews on 24 April 2023.</p> <p>At the JNC Panel meeting on 24 April, Members interviewed the two shortlisted candidates and received a presentation from each on the subject of "<i>What would be your key priorities for the first three months and also the first two years? Tell us what the Council will achieve over the next five years and your approach to securing this?</i>".</p> <p>After a very thorough evaluation process, the Panel unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Fiona Taylor, the current Acting Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Law and Governance, to the position of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) at the designated Chief Executive spot salary of £184,557.</p> | |

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the appointment to the post of Chief Executive is the responsibility of the Assembly based on the recommendation of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel.

Recommendation(s)

The Assembly is recommended to agree the appointment of Fiona Taylor to the post of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) at the spot salary of £184,557.

Reason(s)

To accord with the requirements of Part 2, Chapter 4 of the Council Constitution.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 28 February 2022, the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel agreed to appoint Fiona Taylor to act into the role of Interim Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) with effect from 15 April 2022. This followed the resignation of Chris Naylor as Chief Executive on 15 December 2021 and the ending of interim arrangements whereby Claire Symonds was Acting Chief Executive until she left on 14 April 2022 to become Chief Executive of London Borough of Redbridge.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the Council would recruit to the permanent post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service in 2023.
- 1.3 Arrangements were put in place for the Council to run the recruitment search in-house using the expertise in the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service, and Digital and Communications teams. Additional services such as technical assessment and psychometric testing would be bought in to provide an extensive range of selection arrangements.

2. Search Arrangements

- 2.1 A recruitment crisis affecting local government has significantly impacted on the appointment to senior roles. At the point that the Council commenced its recruitment campaign, two other London Chief Executive positions were out for advert, alongside a number of other Local Government Chief Executive roles across England. To maximise interest in Barking and Dagenham's role, extensive attraction arrangements were deployed which included:
 - A bespoke executive search microsite
 - A paid editorial in the MJ (Municipal Journal) – the leading industry press, and half page advert in the appointments pages.
 - Paid promotion in LinkedIn and additional push notifications
 - Dedicated application portal
 - Opportunities for interested applicants to speak to the Leader about the role.
- 2.2 The advert was open from 23 February to 12 March 2023. Details of the response to the microsite and the editorial will be made available to Members.

2.3 Candidates were asked to submit a CV and a supporting statement addressing how their skills, knowledge, experience, and personal qualities meet the requirement of the post. Five applications were received by the deadline. One application was deemed not to have met the necessary criteria for the post.

3. **Selection arrangements**

3.1 The following selection arrangements were put in place:

- Interview with external technical assessment panel (23 March). The technical assessment panel comprised the following and was supported by Rosemary Oduntan-Oke, the Council's Head of Talent and Resourcing:
 - Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and previously a Senior Civil Servant, Managing Director of the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Chief Executive of LBBD, and Director of Resources at Lewisham; and
 - Nancy Scott, partner at Gatenby Sanderson, experienced executive search and recruitment specialist.
- JNC Panel shortlisting (27 March).
- Stakeholder carousel panels for shortlisted candidates. Three stakeholder panels have been established: Community Leaders, Trade Unions, Chairs of Staff Networks. Stakeholder panels were assisted by external support to draw out their findings, which was presented to JNC members.
- Informal lunch with Cabinet Members.
- Informal meetings with Leader and Deputy Leaders.
- Tour of the borough.
- Psychometric testing (29 March to 4 April).
- Final JNC interview including timed presentation (24 April).

3.2 At the JNC Panel on 27 March, Members considered the applicants' personal statements and CVs together with the external technical assessment panel's report. Mr Whiteman also joined the meeting to advise on the key aspects of the technical report and discuss the findings with the Panel.

3.3 Arising from those considerations, the JNC Panel agreed to shortlist two candidates to progress to stakeholder interviews and final interview by the JNC Panel on 24 April 2023.

3.4 Hays Consultancy were engaged to support the stakeholder panel interviews and psychometric personality testing and the reports on those two processes were considered at a reconvened meeting of the JNC Panel on 24 April 2023. Alongside those reports, the JNC Panel reconsidered the job description and person specification for the post, the CVs and supporting statements of the two candidates and relevant extracts from the external technical assessment report. Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and co-author of the technical assessment report, and representatives of Hays Consultancy were present at the meeting in an advisory capacity to answer any questions in relation to their respective reports.

- 3.5 The JNC Panel received a presentation from both shortlisted candidates on the subject of “*What would be your key priorities for the first three months and also the first two years? Tell us what the Council will achieve over the next five years and your approach to securing this?*” and passed a number of pre-agreed questions to the candidates.
- 3.6 Following a very thorough evaluation process, the JNC Panel unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Fiona Taylor to the post of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) on a permanent basis at the designated Chief Executive spot salary of £184,557.

4. HR Considerations

Implications completed by: Rosemary Oduntan-Oke, Head of Talent and Resourcing

- 4.1 This report proposes the appointment of Fiona Taylor for the post of Chief Executive. HR/OD advice and support has been provided throughout and the recruitment and selection processes are in line with the Council’s arrangements.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Head of Service Finance

- 5.1 The post of Chief Executive is a funded post within the Council’s establishment budget. There are no further financial implications arising.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Dr Paul Feild, Principal Standards & Governance Solicitor

- 6.1 The selection decision must be based on evidence of the candidate’s merit. The process for considering a recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Council’s policies and procedures.
- 6.2 As set out in the body of this Report the formal appointment of the Chief Executive is under the Council’s Constitution an Assembly function following a recommendation of the JNC Appointment, Salaries and Structures Panel (see Constitution Part 2 Chapter 4 paragraph 2.1(x)(a)).
- 6.3 The Council Constitution defines the role of Chief Executive as including appointment to the statutory office of Head of Paid Service under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of Appendices: None