

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Special Full Council – 16 November 2021

Appointment of the Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive

This matter is the responsibility of Full Council

Report Author: Sean Papworth – Assistant Director Corporate & Julie-Ann Wyatt – Interim Strategic People Lead

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To ratify the recommendation of the Appointment Panel that Andrew Pritchard be selected for the position of Chief Executive (including Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer) and Head of Paid Service following the conclusion of the selection process on the 27th October 2021.
- 1.2 That the appointment be confirmed with effect from 17th November 2021.
- 1.3 To confirm the spot salary for the post of £118,000 + Returning Officer Fees to be effective from 17th November 2021.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To confirm the appointment of Andrew Pritchard as, Chief Executive (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer) and Head of Paid Service for Somerset West and Taunton Council with effect from 17th November 2021
- 2.2 To recommend a spot salary for the post of £118,000 + Returning Officer Fees to be effective from 17th November 2021.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, requires that the Council designate one of its officers as Head of the Paid Service (usually the Chief Executive) who is responsible for preparing reports on the way the local authority's staff are organised, on the authority's staffing needs and on the co-ordination of the way in which the authority's functions are discharged. Failure to appoint a Head of Paid Service, which will put the Council in breach of its statutory obligation.
- 3.2 In addition, Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer for the election of Councillors. The Council has traditionally appointed the Chief Executive as Returning Officer which is an independent statutory role. The Chief Executive is also usually the Council's Electoral Registration Officer appointed under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 Taking into account the context of Local Government Reform (“LGR”) and the published timeline in connection with it, the options considered by the Executive were either an Interim CEO through a specialist agency or a permanent CEO through Internal Recruitment. The Executive opted for a twin track approach and an Appointment Panel was then set up to agree the remainder of the process.
- 4.2 The Council’s Constitution sets out that the Appointment of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) should have an Appointment Panel appointed by the Proper Officer including:- (a) The Chair or Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee or the Chair or Vice Chair of a Regulatory Committee; (b) The Leader and two other Members of the Executive;(c) The Chair or Vice Chair of the Council. The above representatives may appoint a substitute as necessary and that all the above, where possible, should reflect the political balance of the Council. The Employment Panel convened comprised Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Leader of the Council; Cllr Derek Perry, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure; Cllr Hazel Priory-Sankey, Chair of the Council; Cllr Ross Henley, Portfolio Holder for Resources; and Cllr Libby Lisgo, Chair, Community Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.3 After the decision to proceed, the role was internally advertised with a closing date of 17th October 2021. Two internal applications were received, and the panel shortlisted both these candidates. Four candidate profiles were received from an external agency, and one was shortlisted. The Appointment Panel met on 27th October 2021 when candidates were assessed by means of a presentation to the Panel together with a competency-based interview. The external interim candidate interview took place via zoom on 29th October due to illness on 27th October.
- 4.4 Following the above selection process, the Appointment Panel agreed unanimously to recommend Andrew Pritchard for appointment as the permanent Chief Executive (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer) and Head of Paid Service with effect from 17 November 2021. The Appointments Panel recommended a spot salary of £118,000 per year + Returning Officer Fees.
- 4.5 A formal offer of appointment will not be made unless the Council agrees the recommendation in this report.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The postholder will be directly responsible for delivery of the corporate plan.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The cost of the recruitment process was met within existing budgets and the salary is within the agreed budget.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 This is covered in section 3 & 4.

8 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 Members followed the SWT standard recruitment process which has been assessed for its equality impacts.

Democratic Path:

- **Appointment Panel - Yes**
- **Scrutiny Committees – No**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes – 16 November 2021**

Reporting Frequency: Ad-hoc**Contact Officers**

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