

Appointment to Role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (Human Resources)

Synopsis of report:

To appoint the new Head of Paid Service of Runnymede Borough Council holding the position of Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

Recommendations:

- 1) That Andrew Pritchard be appointed to the role Head of Paid Service of Runnymede Borough Council, holding the position of Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.
- 2) That a salary as stated in the report for Council on 29 June 2023 apply from 1 August 2023.

1. Introduction

1.1 At a meeting of the Corporate Management Committee on 23 March 2023, the Committee agreed the proposed recruitment process for the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer due to the retirement of the Council's current Chief Executive, Mr. Paul Turrell, on 31 July, 2023.

1.2 Following a procurement process to appoint Executive consultants to assist in the process, Tile Hill were appointed to conduct an executive search of potential applicants, and assist with the process in liaison with Human Resources.

2. The Selection Process

2.1. At a meeting of CMC on 23 March, it was agreed that an Appointments Sub-Committee be established to consider a longlist of applicants for the role of Chief Executive Officer and Head of Paid Service. This longlisting meeting took place on 26 April, 2023.

2.2 Longlisted applicants were then interviewed by a Technical consultant, who was a very experienced Chief Executive, and a consultant from Tile Hill.

2.3 Following the Council elections in May 2023, at a meeting of Full Council on 17 May, a politically balanced standing Appointments Sub-Committee of five Members was appointed to continue with the process, commencing with a shortlisting meeting on 5 June, 2023. Members of the Appointments Sub-Committee selected a number of candidates for the final selection process.

3. The Final Selection Process

3.1 The shortlisted candidates had to complete psychometric tests prior to the final interviews. The last two days of the selection process consisted of an officer interview with a panel of Corporate Heads, a Question and Answer session with the current Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive at which candidates had the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the organisation or the role; a buffet lunch with the Corporate Heads, two Assistant Chief Executives and the current Chief Executive followed by a tour of the borough hosted by two senior planning officers.

- 3.2 The final interviews were held by the Appointments Sub-Committee on 16 June 2023. The interviews commenced with a ten minute presentation followed by an interview with the Members . After due consideration the Appointments Sub-Committee unanimously decided to recommend the appointment of Mr. Andrew Pritchard, formerly Chief Executive of Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 3.3 The salary range for this role with effect from 1 July 2023 is within the range of £127,288 – £142,156. Mr Pritchard would be subject to a salary review at the end of his 6 month probationary period in accordance with the Council's conditions of service where an increase of up to 3% can be made subject to confirmation in the role. He would then be eligible for another percentage increase of 3% on 1 April 2025, and annually thereafter subject to satisfactory performance until he reached the top of the grade.
- 3.4 Members agreed at the meeting of the Council on 29 June 2023 to a conditional offer being made to Mr Pritchard, which Mr Pritchard accepted, and this meeting is being asked to make the formal statutory appointment. Mr Pritchard would be available to commence on 1 August, 2023.

Policy Framework Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Equality Implications

- 4.1 The procedure followed has met the requirements of equalities legislation

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the provisions of section 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 it is the duty of every relevant local authority to designate one of their officers as the head of their paid service; and to provide that officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in his opinion, sufficient to allow them to perform their duties under that section. The specific duties set out in section 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are to prepare proposals on the following matters on a periodic basis:
- (a) the manner in which the discharge by the authority of their different functions is co-ordinated;
 - (b) the number and grades of staff required by the authority for the discharge of their functions;
 - (c) the organisation of the authority's staff; and
 - (d) the appointment and proper management of the authority's staff.
- 5.2 The job title of the post which the officer appointed in accordance with the provisions of section 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 holds can be designated in a number of ways and it is the practice of the Council to designate that post as the position of Chief Executive.
- 5.3 Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 authorises an officer appointed by a local authority to hold office on such reasonable terms and conditions, including conditions as to remuneration, as the authority appointing him think fit. A local authority's power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit is subject to section 41 of the Localism Act 2011 (requirement for determinations relating to terms and conditions of chief officers to comply with pay policy statement). The role of head of paid service is designated as a chief officer position under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
- 5.4 In addition to the requirement imposed on local authorities to appoint a head of paid service section 8 Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the council of

every district/borough and London borough to appoint an officer of the council to be Electoral Registration Officer. The Electoral Registration Officer is an official appointed by the Council to prepare and maintain the Register of Electors. If there were a legal challenge to any act of including, or refusing to include, somebody within the register of electors, it is the Electoral Registration Officer that would convene and conduct the hearing required by statute. The common practice amongst local authorities is to appoint the head of paid service to this role.

- 5.5 Similarly, in England, every district/borough council is required to appoint an officer of the council to be the Returning Officer for the election of district/borough councillors. Whoever is appointed as Returning Officer automatically becomes responsible for the conduct of other elections, and whoever is appointed as Electoral Registration Officer becomes responsible for the conduct of some elections (most notably, Parliamentary elections as Acting Returning Officer). The common practice amongst local authorities is to appoint the head of paid service to this role.

Background papers

None stated