



NORWICH City Council

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 27/10/2023

Report title: **Appointment of Director of finance and Section 151 officer**

Portfolio: Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources

Report from: HR & OD business partner

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

The report seeks the agreement of the Full Council to appoint the candidate nominated by the Appointment Panel to the role of Director of finance and section 151 officer.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council:

- 1) Approve the appointment of Karen Sly as the Council's permanent Director of finance and section 151 officer.
- 2) Delegate to the Chief Executive and head of paid service, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise all other matters relating to the appointment.

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- People live independently and well in a diverse and safe city.
- Norwich is a sustainable and healthy city.
- Norwich has the infrastructure and housing it needs to be a successful city.
- The city has an inclusive economy in which residents have equal opportunity to flourish.
- Norwich City Council is in good shape to serve the city.

Appointment to this role is critical to delivering all the Council's corporate priorities and the financial stability of the council.

Report details

1. Following the appointment of Louise Rawsthorne to the role of chief executive and head of paid service in May 2023, a review of the executive leadership team structure has been undertaken.
2. It was agreed to commence an open national recruitment campaign for seven roles.
3. The council engaged the services of a recruitment partner, Gatenby Sanderson to support the recruitment and selection processes for some of the roles.
4. The recruitment campaign went live on the 30 August 2023 and featured a microsite and half page job advert in the Municipal Journal (the MJ). The closing date for applications was 24 September 2023.
5. Longlisting was carried out week commencing 2 October 2023.
6. The longlisted candidates undertook preliminary interviews with an external technical assessor which informed the recommended shortlist. The Appointment Panel was convened of 4 Councillors: the Leader of the Council, Mike Stonard, Deputy Leader, Beth Jones, and Portfolio Holder for Resources, Paul Kendrick and Leader of the Green Group, Lucy Galvin.
7. Shortlisted candidates undertook psychometric testing prior to a rigorous assessment and selection day on the 17 October 2023.
8. The final selection day included panel interviews with members, employees and members of the senior leadership team. All of the assessment information including feedback from the panels was considered by the members of the Appointment Panel.
9. The final interview with the Appointments Panel was also held on 17 October and Karen Sly was selected as the successful candidate. Karen has been made a provisional offer, subject to Council approval.
10. Karen has been working as the Executive Director of Resources (S151) at Great Yarmouth Borough Council since April 2023. She is a member of the Executive Leadership Team and undertakes all S151 Officer responsibilities. She leads on the Council's strategic approach to financial planning and ensures financial governance processes are followed for all external funding projects. Karen also leads the internal audit service and supports the Great Yarmouth Council's governance framework and maintains performance and risk systems.
11. Prior to this Karen was Finance director at Great Yarmouth Borough Council for a period of 7 years and was the Financial Services manager/chief accountant at North Norfolk District Council for 8 years prior to that. Karen started her career in local government in 1995 with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council where she held various financial positions.

Consultation

12. The proposed appointment was notified to members of Cabinet as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 and no objections were raised.

Implications

Financial and resources

13. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2022-26 and budget.
14. The conditional offer of employment has been made within the salary range agreed in the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2023-24 for the role of £82,089 - £93,531 per annum plus on costs.
15. There is also provision available under the Council's Market Supplement policy for a Recruitment Supplement to be paid should this be necessary. This is a temporary payment made to an individual to ensure their recruitment by enhancing the payments being offered, bringing their total reward package up to the market rate. Payments are subject to regular review i.e., annually or as part of each new recruitment exercise.
16. The value of the supplement is determined by the difference between the top point of the evaluated grade and the established market rate for the role in question. Under the policy the payment will not normally exceed 10% of the maximum point on the grade, however there is provision to increase further at the discretion of the Corporate Leadership Team.

Legal

17. Section 151 Officer: Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, to have responsibility for those arrangements.
18. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) set out the legal requirements for appointment to executive posts. These requirements are set out in the Council's Constitution. A proposed appointment of a Director of Finance must be notified to all Members of Cabinet, who will have the opportunity to raise any objections for consideration. The appointment of the S151 Officer must be approved by Council.
19. In accordance with Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 when appointing a person to employment within the Council the appointment shall be on merit.
20. If Council agrees the recommendation all of these requirements will have been met.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Health, social and economic impact	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Crime and disorder	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Children and adults safeguarding	There are no specific implications arising from this report
Environmental impact	There are no specific implications arising from this report

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
The council fails to approve the appointment of director of finance and S151 officer	Non-compliance with financial, statutory and constitutional requirements; lack of leadership.	The recommendation in this report seeks to ensure that there is effective leadership arrangements in place and meet requirement to appoint to statutory role of section 151 officer

Other options considered

21. None.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

22. This recommendation is being made by the Appointments Panel following a rigorous assessment and selection process and ensures the Council has effective leadership and its statutory roles are fulfilled.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None

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