



NORWICH City Council

Committee name: Council

Committee date: 28/04/2023

Report title: Appointment of the Chief Executive, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

Portfolio: Councillor Waters, Leader of the council

Report from: Head of HR and organisational development

Wards: All wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To seek approval to formally offer the position of chief executive and head of paid service to the candidate recommended by the member appointment panel following a recruitment process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council:

1. Approve the appointment of Louise Rawsthorne as the council's permanent chief executive and head of paid service with effect from 1 May 2023.
2. Delegate to the head of HR and organisational development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise all other matters relating to the appointment.
3. Confirm that the appointment incorporates the statutory roles of returning officer and electoral registration officer.

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.

The role of the Chief Executive is critical to delivering all the Council's corporate priorities.

Report details

1. Following the confirmation that Stephen Evans would be leaving the Council in March 2023, it was agreed to commence an open national recruitment campaign for the role of chief executive and head of paid service.
2. The council engaged the services of a recruitment partner, GatenbySanderson to support the recruitment and selection processes.
3. The recruitment campaign went live in the week commencing 27 February 2023 and featured a microsite and half page job advert in the Municipal Journal (the MJ). The closing date for applications was 19 March 2023.
4. Longlisting was carried out by an Appointment Panel on 22 March 2023. The Appointment Panel was convened of 5 Councillors; the Leader of the Council, Alan Waters, Deputy Leader of the Council, Gail Harris, Portfolio Holder for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth, Mike Stonard, and representatives from the Green and Liberal Democrat groups, Councillors Sandra Bogelein and James Wright respectively and was appointed in order to advise Council in making its decision on the appointment. The longlisted candidates undertook preliminary interviews with a technical assessor which informed the recommended shortlist. The Appointments Panel agreed the shortlist at a meeting on 3 April 2023.
5. Three shortlisted candidates undertook psychometric testing prior to a rigorous assessment and selection day on 18 April 2023.
6. The day included panel interviews with partners, members, employees and the senior leadership team. All of the assessment information including feedback from the panels was considered by the members of the Appointment Panel.
7. The final interviews with the Appointments Panel were also held on 18 April and Louise Rawsthorne was selected as the successful candidate. Louise Rawsthorne has been made a provisional offer, subject to Council approval.
8. Louise joined the city council in November 2020 as interim director of people and neighbourhoods.
9. Following that, she became the council's permanent executive director of community services in April 2021 – a role she continued in before taking up the interim chief executive role in March 2023. In her executive director role, she had responsibility for 400 members of staff, a £90m revenue budget and led a large directorate of multi-disciplined teams including housing services, community safety, customer services, communications, transformation and strategy.

10. Before joining Norwich, Louise spent two years (2018-2020) at the Royal Borough of Kingston, first as assistant director of homes and property and then as director of development, focused on delivering regeneration within the borough.
11. Between 2012 and 2018, Louise worked for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, including head of economy and more latterly as the managing director of the organisation's wholly owned companies.

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 £133,521 - £145,483 per annum plus on costs. This will be adjusted for the 2023/24 pay settlement when agreed.

Legal

15. The Chief Executive is Head of Paid Service under the Constitution. The Council is also required to appoint a Returning Officer, to oversee the running of the election, and Electoral Registration Officer, who oversees the management of the election register, roles which are traditionally undertaken by the Chief Executive.
16. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) set out the legal requirements for appointing a Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive). These requirements are set out in the Council's Constitution. A proposed appointment of a Head of Paid Service must be notified to all Members of Cabinet, who will have the opportunity to raise any objections for consideration. The appointment must be approved by Council.
17. In accordance with Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 when appointing a person to a paid office or employment within the Council the appointment shall be on merit.
18. 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 chief executive and head of paid service	Ineffective leadership arrangements and lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.	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 head of paid service.

Other options considered

19. None.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

20. 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

Contact officer: Dawn Bradshaw, head of HR and organisational development.

Telephone number: 01603 987524

Email address: dawnbradshaw@norwich.gov.uk



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