



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 7 January 2020

Report Title	Interim Statutory Officer Recruitment
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the approach to the recruitment of interim statutory roles for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Unitary Council.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the WNJC:

- 2.1 Endorse the recruitment and selection approach to the Interim appointments of Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Interim Statutory Officer roles will need to be in place for both shadow councils in May 2020 and it is a requirement to confirm the appointments at the first shadow council meeting, to be held within 14 days of the election.

The draft Structural Changes Order ring fences these interim responsibilities to existing officers of the District, Borough and County Councils in Northamptonshire. So, for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Council, the interim statutory designations will apply to officers from Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, South Northamptonshire Council and the County Council.

The statutory roles are described as designations because in statute they are a set of responsibilities, rather than a full role, to be discharged by the designated officers.

3.1.2 Consultation

The West Northamptonshire Joint Committee originally reviewed interim statutory recruitment through an established task and finish appointments group in May 2019. The outputs of this group included role profiles and a recruitment and selection process.

The Integrated Future Northants Programme team have combined the work that has been undertaken in West Northamptonshire with the proposals developed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee (NNJC) in October/November 2019, to present an integrated recruitment process for each Shadow Council.

This report summarises the work that has been undertaken to date on the interim statutory officer recruitment process for each shadow authority and the recommendations put forward by the North and the West working groups. Chief Executives have also offered advice and suggestions on the process to support this.

The final proposals were reviewed by the Future Northants Leaders Oversight Board on Wednesday 13th November 2019.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy and Process

4.1.1 This report outlines a process for recruiting the Interim Statutory roles in 2020 for the new shadow Councils.

One of the key areas discussed was the commitment needed in both time and capacity to undertake these roles effectively; to enable the shadow councils to deliver the necessary work in the period after May 2020, until the permanent appointments are made.

The proposals below are based on views from Leaders, Chief Executives and Managing Directors; notably that the interim roles will require significant capacity to undertake the work.

In particular, the role of interim Head of Paid Service would be impacted as each Chief Executive will have an ongoing Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) role for a significant workstream in the Future Northants Programme in addition to their own sovereign council responsibilities, the former of which is expected to continue in the interim role.

It is therefore recommended that the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) is a full time role. It is expected that the duration of the interim roles will run from May 2020 to the appointment of permanent officers, which may vary depending on who is appointed and their possible start date. It is usual for these interim

roles to be short term where possible and October 2020 is a working assumption of when the permanent incumbents will be in place. In recognition of this short term expectation, it is recommended that this is not long enough to reassign each sovereign council's statutory responsibilities. As such, albeit there will be a backfill requirement for interim Chief Executive's sovereign council responsibilities and duties; they will be expected to maintain an oversight for their own Council as well as the SRO responsibilities that have been noted.

With regards to the interim Monitoring and Section 151 Officers, it is not anticipated that capacity demands will be as significant as the Head of Paid Service role; albeit there will still be active involvement required in the Future Northants work. It is therefore recommended that these be managed within the existing role, allowing the appointed interims scope to backfill elements of their substantive role as required. This will enable the statutory officer to undertake the interim role and also keep an oversight of the statutory responsibilities in their respective council.

It was agreed as part of the proposals to the Leaders and Chief Executives/Managing Directors that the process should be the same for all employees involved and on the same timetable and key principles as follows:-

- That the Interim appointments process starts in March, with applications made in April 2020; followed by the selection process in May 2020. The interview dates would be after the election; within the 14 days prior to the first Shadow Council meeting (where the interim appointments are confirmed).
- That each Council would consider the capacity impact for existing roles in April (should applicants from their Authority be successful), to ensure business as usual is considered.
- That the Job Description and Person Specifications attached are agreed as the basis for the interim roles.
- That the Interim Head of Paid Service is full time and Monitoring and Section 151 officers will undertake the interim role alongside their current role – albeit with supported/ backfill capacity at different levels as required.
- That the interim roles do not carry any additional financial remuneration.
- That the interim recruitment process is open to officers from councils in the West only for interim West Northamptonshire roles; and open to officers from councils in North only for interim North Northamptonshire roles; with officers from the County Council able to apply for both as defined by the draft Statutory Order. Expressions of interest to be the preferred mechanism for applicants.
- Interview and presentation to be the preferred selection method.
- That the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee (Sub Group) will oversee the shortlisting process; ensuring that applications meet the essential criteria for interviews. The selection process and appointment decisions will be undertaken by the Shadow Council once formed.
- That these roles are clearly positioned and communicated as interim to avoid any perception by individuals, public or councils that this is

connected with the permanent appointment, which will be a separate independent process.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report is about interim roles so the financial impact and support needed by HR will be provided by the integrated Future Northants Programme team.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Interim appointments cannot be extended beyond 31 December 2020 if the Statutory Changes Order is made into legislation in February 2020.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 None

Job Description Interim Head of Paid Service

Role Purpose:

- To act as Head of Paid Service for the Shadow Authority
- To progress the LGR Programme for the West Northamptonshire Council area, to ensure the successful transition to the new Authority.

All the above to be within the provisions of the Structural Changes Order.

Main Responsibilities:

- To act as Head of Paid Service for the Shadow Authority, in accordance with section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- To progress the delivery of the LGR Programme in line with statutory requirements and, with the Strategic Delivery Director of the LGR Programme, ensure the transition to the Unitary Authority runs smoothly and deploying resources effectively to achieve this.
- To lead and manage the Interim Monitoring Officer and Interim S.151 Officer for the Shadow Authority.
- To advise Councillors of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority, its Committees and Working Groups on matters relevant to the Shadow Authority, the LGR Programme and the establishment of the new Unitary Authority.
- Represent the interests of the Shadow Authority and the LGR Programme through visible presence and active engagement and communication with key stakeholders and relevant agencies, bodies, MPs, etc.
- To have oversight for the transformation of Children's Services as well as Adult Social Care Services.
- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the role to ensure the Shadow Authority meets its objectives and statutory requirements.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with elected Members, key stakeholders, constituent authorities and strategic partners to support the smooth implementation of the LGR Programme.

Person Specification

Background and Experience

A proven track record of achievement at Chief Executive level within local government

Demonstrable experience and success in:-

- Leading Organisational change, managing a diverse range of services and translating organisation ambitions into tangible achievements and service delivery improvements.
- Effective partnership working and collaboration, developing and maintaining positive relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Leading and motivating senior professional staff to a high level of achievement.
- Management and control of large, complex budgets, programmes and projects.
- Effectively managing an Organisation in achieving a balanced budget
- Giving professional advice to and building effective working relationships with senior managers and elected Members.
- Promoting and maintaining an organisation's reputation.

Skills/knowledge

- A thorough understanding of current issues and future challenges facing local government and of LGR.
- Demonstrable leadership skills
- Effective communication skills, to engage a range of audiences and positively represent the Shadow Authority
- Strong influencing and negotiating skills
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to work strategically
- Political awareness and the ability to work successfully within a political environment through effective working relationships with Elected Members
- Ability to plan and implement strategies and programmes.

Personal qualities

- Collaborative and strategic leader – able to motivate and work across boundaries and achieve performance/results through others
- Robust and resilient
- Flexible to meet competing demands and challenging circumstances
- Personality and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of all stakeholders
- Ethical, accountable behaviour including a personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity

Job Description Interim Section 151 Officer

Responsible to: Interim Head of Paid Service of the Shadow Authority

Role Purpose:

- To be responsible for the financial affairs of the Shadow Authority, with accountability for the financial probity of the Shadow Authority and the statutory responsibilities under s.151 of the Local Government Act.
- To establish proper arrangements for the administration of the financial affairs of the new Unitary Authority through co-ordination of the finance workstream.
- As a member of the Programme Team, support the delivery of the LGR Programme for the West Northamptonshire Council area to ensure the successful transition to the new Authority.

The above to be undertaken within the provisions of the Structural Changes Order.

Main Responsibilities:

- To be accountable for the responsibilities under the Local Government Act s.151 to ensure the Shadow Authority's financial probity and proper conduct of its financial activities.
- To provide strong financial advice and challenge to the Shadow Authority and Programme Team based on robust analysis, forecasting and financial planning.
- To deliver the new Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual budget for 2021/22.
- To ensure that appropriate financial standards and processes are in place, through the development of effective financial policies and strategies, including:-
 - Medium Term Financial Planning and Budget setting and monitoring process.
 - Financial Regulations and Procedures
 - Budget Management Framework
 - Contract Management Framework
 - Procurement Strategy
 - Risk Management Strategy
 - Treasury Management Strategy/Policy
 - Capital Investment Strategy
 - Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
 - Debt Management Strategy
 - Money Laundering Policy
 - Annual audit plan
 - Council Tax Benefit Scheme
 - Business Rate Scheme
 - Corporate Debt Policy
 - Internal Audit function
 - Submission of all returns and grants
 - Banking arrangements
 - Insurance arrangements

- To be the lead officer for the management of the Council's Strategic Risk Register, operational risk registers and ensure that action to mitigate risk is taken corporately.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with elected Members, key stakeholders including constituent Section 151 officers, constituent authorities and strategic partners to support the smooth implementation of the LGR Programme.
- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the role to ensure the Shadow Authority meets its objectives and statutory requirements.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Professional qualification CCAB (Consultative Council of Accountancy Bodies), qualified CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) preferred.
- Membership of one or more professional bodies as set out s.113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

Background and Experience

- Demonstrable successful track record as a senior manager in local government, specifically in the leadership and management of finance.
- Evidence of successful contributions to financial management including the development and effective implementation of corporate strategies and policies.
- Thorough understanding of the S151 role and responsibilities and substantial experience of financial management in a local government context.
- Demonstrable experience and success in:-
- Organisational change
- Effective partnership working and collaboration, developing and maintaining positive relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Giving professional advice to and building effective working relationships with senior managers and elected Members.

Skills/knowledge

- A thorough understanding of current issues and future challenges facing local government and of LGR.
- Excellent current working knowledge and understanding of local government issues and statutory requirements, with a particular emphasis on financial issues.
- Demonstrable leadership skills
- Effective communication skills, to engage a range of audiences and positively represent the Shadow Authority
- Strong influencing and negotiating skills
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to work strategically and apply sound judgement
- Political awareness and the ability to work successfully within a political environment through effective working relationships with Elected Members
- Ability to plan and implement strategies, policies and programmes.

Personal Qualities

- Collaborative and strategic leader – able to motivate and work across boundaries and achieve performance/results through others
- Robust and resilient
- Flexible to meet competing demands and challenging circumstances
- Personality and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of all stakeholders
- Ethical, accountable behaviour including a personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity

Job Description Interim Monitoring Officer

Responsible to: Interim Head of Paid Service of the Shadow Authority

Role Purpose:

- To be accountable for the probity of the Shadow Authority by carrying out the statutory responsibilities as Monitoring Officer.
- To establish constitutional arrangements for the new Unitary Authority through co-ordination of the Monitoring Officers' workstream.
- As a member of the Programme Team, support the delivery of the LGR Programme for the West Northamptonshire Council area to ensure the successful transition to the new Authority.

The above to be undertaken within the provisions of the Structural Changes Order.

Main Responsibilities:

- To be responsible for the probity of the Shadow Authority by carrying out the statutory duties of Monitoring Officer:-
 - Ensuring all decisions taken by Councillors and Officers are lawful.
 - Ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct, the need to register interests and compliance with the locally adopted and national standards regime.
 - Ensuring the Constitution of the Shadow Authority is designed, implemented and maintained to meet the requirements of Councillors and to be legally compliant. This includes Full Council Procedural Rules, Schemes of Delegation, Scrutiny and Partnership arrangements.
 - To act as the Proper Officer for access to information – ensuring that Member decisions (and officer decisions as appropriate), reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers are properly recorded and publically available as soon as possible and retained for public access in accordance with legal requirements.
 - To advise the Shadow Authority and Programme Team on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, and issues relating to maladministration, financial impropriety (in conjunction with the Interim s151 Officer), standards, probity and the budget and policy framework.
 - To provide expertise and guidance to the Shadow Council, it's Committees and the Programme Team on matters relating to democratic processes, statutory guidance, the Council's Constitution in order to resolve problems/issues and achieve objectives lawfully and within sound democratic processes and principles.
 - To be responsible for preparing the Council's draft Constitution following consultation with other officers as appropriate.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with elected Members, key stakeholders, constituent authorities and strategic partners to support the smooth implementation of the LGR Programme.

- To undertake any other duties commensurate with the role to ensure the Shadow Authority meets its objectives and statutory requirements.

Person Specification

Qualifications:-

- Relevant degree or professional qualification (A relevant legal qualification is desirable but not essential).
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

Background and Experience

- Demonstrable successful track record as a Monitoring Officer, specifically in the leadership and management of constitutional and democratic processes.
- Evidence of providing strategic legal advice.
- Thorough understanding of the Monitoring Officer role and responsibilities
- Demonstrable experience and success in:-
 - Organisational change
 - Effective partnership working and collaboration, developing and maintaining positive relationships with a range of stakeholders.
 - Giving professional advice to and building effective working relationships with senior managers and elected Members.

Skills/knowledge

- A thorough understanding of current issues and future challenges facing local government and of LGR.
- Excellent current working knowledge and understanding of local government issues and statutory requirements, with a particular emphasis on legal and democratic issues.
- Demonstrable leadership skills
- Effective communication skills, to engage a range of audiences and positively represent the Shadow Authority
- Strong influencing and negotiating skills
- Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to work strategically and apply sound judgement
- Political awareness and the ability to work successfully within a political environment through effective working relationships with Elected Members
- Ability to plan and implement strategies, policies and programmes.

Personal Qualities

- Collaborative and strategic leader – able to motivate and work across boundaries and achieve performance/results through others
- Robust and resilient
- Flexible to meet competing demands and challenging circumstances

- Personality and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of all stakeholders

Ethical, accountable behaviour including a personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity