

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 66

Subject: Appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

Report of: Executive Director – Governance, People & Resources

Contact Officer: Name: Alison McManamon – Director of HR & OD
Tel: 01273 290511
Email: alison.mcmanamon@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 To seek Council's approval of the appointment of Jess Gibbons as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, following a selection process which concluded with final interviews on Friday 1st December 2023.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Council appoints Jess Gibbons as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service subject to the satisfactory completion of any outstanding pre-employment checks..

2.2 That the commencing salary for the post be set at £190,000 per annum

2.3 That the appointment takes effect from 1st March 2023 or later.

2.4 That the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take all steps necessary or incidental to implementation of the appointment, including any detailed terms or administrative arrangements that may be outstanding.

3. Context and background information

3.1 Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council has a legal duty to appoint a "Head of Paid Service" which, in practical terms, is a role fulfilled by the Chief Executive. The appointment of the Chief Executive requires Full Council approval.

3.2 An interim Chief Executive was appointed by the Council to replace the previous permanent Chief Executive from 8th May 2023. An interim appointment was made in order to have someone in post as soon as possible following the departure of the previous Chief Executive and pending the process for a permanent appointment which needed to be agreed by the new Administration following the local elections.

- 3.3 Following an external recruitment campaign, four candidates were invited to the final selection process for the post of Chief Executive. The selection process comprised a stakeholder assessment day on Thursday 23rd November and final interviews undertaken by the Appointments and Remuneration Panel, a cross-party group of 6 Members, on Friday 1st December.
- 3.4 The stakeholder assessment day involved candidates participating in three sessions with the following groups:
- City Partners – representatives from Sussex Police, NHS, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and the Brighton Chamber;
 - Communities – representatives from a number of community groups in the city as well as two representatives from the Council's staff Networks
 - Young People – two representatives from the Youth Council and two from the Care Leavers' Forum.
- 3.5 Feedback from each of the stakeholder groups was collated and provided to the Appointment and Remuneration Panel to feed into the final decision making process.
- 3.6 The recommendation of the Panel is that Jess Gibbons be appointed as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- 3.7 Jess has been Chief Operations Officer and Corporate Director of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council since December 2021, where she holds responsibility for all operational services, including Environment, Infrastructure, Regeneration, Customer, Arts and Property, Planning and Destination, Housing and Communities, and Commercial Operations.
- 3.8 Jess was previously Director for Communities and Neighborhoods with Wiltshire Council and Director of Community Services with London Borough of Camden. Other previous roles include Programme Director HS2, Head of Place Shaping, and Head of Parks and Open Spaces, all with London Borough of Camden.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Council is required to appoint a Head of Paid Service however there are options for how the senior management structure is configured and which specific post undertakes the statutory duties of the Head of Paid Service.
- 4.2 The current senior structure is defined in the constitution.
- 4.3 There are no proposals to amend the role of Chief Executive but, as normal for management roles, other duties or responsibilities may be undertaken by the role commensurate with the grade of the role.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Appointment and Remuneration Panel is cross-party and membership is on a politically proportionate basis.
- 5.2 Paragraph 3.4 sets out how stakeholders in the community and key organisations in the city were involved in the process.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid of Service, and the remuneration of that post, requires Council approval of the recommendation of the Appointments and Remuneration Panel, hence this report.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The proposed appointment can be funded from the existing salary budget. The Chief Executive's salary is set to ensure it is competitive when compared to roles of similar size and complexity elsewhere and with regard to the challenges, additional hours and working arrangements required to achieve the requirements of the role.
- 7.2 The salary is on a single fixed salary point. Nationally negotiated cost of living awards are applied as and when they are agreed.

Finance officer consulted: Nigel Manvell Date consulted 5/12/23:

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Council has a duty to appoint a Head of Paid Service. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001, this has to be approved by the Full Council and cannot be delegated to a committee or a sub-committee of the Council. The Head of Paid Service, in addition to their statutory role, will undertake all the functions listed in the Council's constitution, including overall responsibility for the delivery and direction of Council services. The contract of employment for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will need to reflect the statutory procedures relating to the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, and S151 Officers as set out in the Local Authorities (standing Orders) (Amendments) Regulations 2015.

Lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted: 04/12/23

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The process for appointing a Chief Executive has been undertaken with a robust recruitment process in accordance with Council policies, which reflect equalities legislation and good practice. The appointments process was undertaken having regard to equalities principles and candidates' approach to equality and diversity was one of the criteria for selecting the successful candidate. The Council also appointed a recruitment partner to support this

critical appointment and a major part of the criteria for selecting this partner was evidencing a track record of attracting a diverse range of candidates.

10. Sustainability implications

10.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.