

Committee: Full Council

Date: 3rd February 2021

Agenda item:

Wards: All

Subject: Chief Officer Recruitment

Lead officer:

Lead member: Mark Allison, Leader of the Council

Contact officer: Liz Hammond, Head of HR

Exempt or confidential report

The following paragraph of [Part 4b Section 10 of the constitution](#) applies in respect of information given in appendix 2 of this report and it is therefore exempt from publication:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).

Members and officers are advised not to disclose the contents of this appendix.

Recommendations:

- A To note and approve the commencement of the recruitment process for a replacement Chief Executive in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 as the current post holder will be retiring in July 2021.
 - B To note and approve the recruitment salary package of £181,332 to £201,741 per annum for the post of Chief Executive as required by the Council's pay policy statement.
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Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1 The post of Chief Executive covers a statutory role as defined by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 which require every local authority to appoint a Head of Paid Service, usually referred to as the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive has professional responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of the local authority. The Chief Executive is responsible for leading, inspiring and managing the Corporate Management Team to deliver the Council's vision, values and objectives, ensuring that all resources are used effectively in a co-ordinated approach to delivering excellent customer services to residents.
- 1.2 The role is a challenging one whereby the post holder is required to have complex specialist skills and be able to lead in an ever-changing environment such as local government.

- 1.3 The Council's pay policy statement requires that recruitment packages over £100k have approval of full council.
- 1.4 The current (2020) Merton Chief Executive pay scales range from £181,332 to £201,741 per annum. Recruitment advice is that we would be able to appoint a suitably qualified candidate within this salary band. Salaries will normally increase from 1 April each year following a nationally determined pay award.

2. Details

- 2.1 The post of Chief Executive will become vacant in July 2021 as the current post holder is taking retirement.
- 2.2 A permanent replacement is to be recruited.
- 2.3 The Chief Executive grade, has the current salary range of £181,332 to £201,741 per annum.
- 2.4 As the whole salary range is in excess of £100k, approval is sought to pay the within that range. .
- 2.5 The required approval is in line with the requirements of the Council's pay policy statement.
- 2.6 The Appointments Committee met on 21st January 2021 and agreed the approach to be taken, the executive search agent to use for the campaign and the process to follow.
- 2.7 The recruitment campaign for the post of Chief Executive will be handled by the supplier at Appendix 2 as agreed by the Appointments Committee. This decision was taken based on evidence of their strong track record of successfully recruiting to Chief Executive roles within London, and their strong commitment to equality and diversity.
- 2.8 The Chief Executive role is a challenging one, and requires the post holder to have certain specialist skills and experience to enable them to provide leadership to the Council to provide high quality services to the residents of the borough. The job description and person specification are attached at Appendix 1. This was approved by the Appointments Committee with an agreement that further work will be done with the chosen supplier to modernise the requirements.

3. Alternative options

- 3.1 The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service, and as such is a statutory role and the Council has a duty to appoint to this post; therefore, there is no alternative option other than to recruit a replacement.
- 3.2 The Appointments Committee considered whether the possibility of appointing a shared service Chief Executive should be explored. However, it was agreed that given the significance of the role in terms of leadership and accountability, especially at the present time, the preference would be for Merton to continue to have its own Chief Executive.

4. Consultation undertaken or proposed

- 4.1 The Appointments Committee met on 21st January 2021 and agreed the process to follow. The Committee agreed to appoint a subcommittee to form the final

interview panel. Key stakeholders will be involved in the assessment of the shortlisted candidates.

5. Timetable

- 5.1 If approval is given, then the recruitment campaign will commence. An interim arrangement may be considered.

6. Financial, Resource and Property Implications

- 6.1 The 2020/21 salary budget allocation including on-costs for the Chief Executive post is £236,082 to £262,781 per annum.
- 6.2 The chosen executive search agents' fee can be found in their proposal at Appendix 2. Additional costs will be for advertising, technical assessor fee and psychometric assessment costs, which will be dependent on the number of shortlisted candidates and assessments, will be used. These costs will be paid from the Chief Executive budget.

7. Legal and statutory implications

- 7.1 The Council's pay policy statement requires that recruitment packages over £100k have approval of full council.
- 7.2 This post is covered by the Employee Procedure Rules set out in part 4H of the constitution. The Appointments Subcommittee will recommend the appointment of the new Chief Executive to full Council as that decision is one that is required by law to be taken by the Council as a whole.
- 7.3 In all other respects, the process must comply with the Council's recruitment procedure.
- 7.4 As with all appointments of officers and staff, the appointment must be made on merit in accordance with section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 8.1 The contents of this report are designed to ensure that the Council's processes are human rights and equalities compliant.

It is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender, race, disability, age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. This refers to both direct and indirect discrimination. In effect, the process has to be evaluated against three tests (1) intention (2) method (3) effect. Where there is an **intention** to discriminate on any of the prohibited grounds, this would be unlawful. Where there is no such intention but the recruitment **methods** used are discriminatory, then the outcome may be open to challenge. Where the intention and method are sound but the **effect** is shown to have disproportionate effect on a particular category of applicant then the outcome may be open to challenge.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 9.1 None

10. Risk management and health and safety implications

10.1 The Appointments Committee will be invited to satisfy itself that the procedures operate as designed.

11. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

11.1 Appendix 1 – Job Description and Person Specification

11.2 Appendix 2 – Chosen Executive Search agent proposal (exempt from disclosure)

Appendix One – job description and person specification

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

JOB DESCRIPTION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Responsible to – Leader of the Council

ROLE

1. To work in partnership with Members to provide leadership, vision and strategic direction to the Council.
2. To lead, inspire and manage the Corporate Management Team to deliver the Council's vision, values and objectives, ensuring that all resources are used effectively in a co-ordinated approach to delivering excellent customer services to residents.
3. To be an ambassador for the Council and to represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council with external bodies.
4. To be the Council's Head of Paid Service.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Leadership and Vision

- 1.1 Work in partnership with Members to determine the corporate culture of the Council and guide, support and advise Members on the development and implementation of Council's policy.
- 1.2 Provide decisive leadership for the organisation, establishing a clear model of leadership, pursuing the vision, strategic goals and priorities of the Council.

- 1.3 Inspire a culture of continuous development and act as a role model to inspire all employees to promote the values of the Council and present a positive image to the community.
- 1.4 Drive commercialism and an entrepreneurial and effective commissioning culture, with effective systems and processes across the whole Council.
- 1.5 Act as an ambassador for the Council, building external relationships, including partnership working within the Borough (e.g. police, voluntary sector, health) to enhance our reputation, ensuring that the organisation is well regarded, contributing fully to local, sub-regional, regional and national partnerships to best effect.
- 1.6 To deliver efficiency and value for money and sound financial management.
- 1.7 Undertake the lead role in the Council's emergency planning arrangements and the London Wide Local Authority Gold arrangements.

2. **Management**

- 2.1 Inspire and shape the organisation to deliver effective and efficient services through a framework of performance management.
- 2.2 Promote learning and development and support a performance management culture.
- 2.3 Lead and develop the Corporate Management Team to ensure that all resources are deployed effectively to deliver on the Council's vision and objectives.
- 2.4 Promote the development of effective policies in response to the changing demands imposed by legislation, government intervention and service demands.

3. **Partnership**

- 3.1 Foster effective partnership arrangements with both internal and external stakeholders.
- 3.2 Establish effective working relationships with the Leader of the Council and all Members.

4. Member Relations

- 4.1 Act as principal adviser on policy and ensure Members are able to formulate and determine policy in a way consistent with the effective, financially prudent and legal administration of the Council.

5. Service Delivery

- 5.1 Ensure that all service delivery is customer focused and delivered within a framework that supports valuing diversity, inclusion and access.
- 5.2 Provide a framework within which to challenge service provision ensuring that effective and efficient services are delivered to the community.
- 5.3 Provide good value for the community with efficient and effective cost effective services, through maximising resources, incorporating best practice and utilising new technology and innovation.
- 5.4 Ensure that service delivery is supported by a comprehensive performance management system that tracks the implementation of corporate priorities and objectives.

6. Valuing Diversity

- 6.1 Champion valuing diversity and equal opportunities ensuring that Merton embraces a culture that promotes full and equal access to learning, employment services and cultural life.
- 6.2 Promote the Council's commitment to valuing diversity and providing equal access to service delivery, ensuring that all residents and service users are treated with fairness, equity and respect.
- 6.3 To provide the leadership, communication and action, which will exemplify the Council's values, sense of purpose and commitment to ensure equality of opportunity and strengthen cohesion in the local community.
- 6.4 Ensure the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity for all employees within a culture of fairness, equity and respect is achieved through the effective implementation of policies.

7. **Political Management**

- 7.1 Work with political understanding and sensitivity. Promotes a culture of political awareness that helps translate political will into appropriate future strategies.

8. **Marketing**

- 8.1 Act as a pro-active ambassador for the Council, creating the mind set for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements, promoting and marketing a positive image of the Council and the Borough as an attractive business partner and as a place within which to live and work.

9. **Other**

- 9.1 Carry out duties as may be reasonably required.
- 9.2 Undertake all duties in accordance with Council policies and statutory obligations.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

1. Educated to degree level with evidence of continuing personal development.

Background and Experience

1. A proven track record of success at senior management level (although not necessarily as Chief Executive) within a local authority or a large organisation.
2. Sound knowledge and experience of financial management and information systems within a large, complex organisation.
3. A track record of demonstrable success in change management, managing a diverse range of services and translating organisational ambitions into real achievements and service delivery improvements.
4. Successful track record of establishing a strong performance culture, effective performance and service quality evaluation that involves users and driving up standards and performance.
5. Proven experience of establishing effective working relationships with multi-cultural communities and dealing with issues of diversity.
6. A successful track record in resolving internal conflict within a complex environment.
7. A proven track record of implementing effective, innovative strategy in a large, multi-disciplinary environment.
8. Proven experience of promoting positive images, both internally and externally, of a large organisation.

9. A successful track record of building effective, sustainable and meaningful relationships across diverse sectors and interests and successfully bringing together coalitions of diverse interests to agree and deliver a clear vision and strategies.

Personal Qualities

1. Highly motivated, enthusiastic and an excellent communicator.
2. An effective manager with an approachable style.
3. Committed, robust and resilient enough to work within a challenging and complex environment.
4. A team worker who can build partnerships, work effectively across boundaries and achieve performance and results through others.

Personal Style and Behaviour

1. Well developed leadership skills.
2. Personal and professional credibility.
3. Open-minded adaptable.
4. Resilient and persuasive.
5. High levels of energy and commitment.
6. A high level of political judgement.
7. A high degree of probity and integrity.
8. An innovator and forward thinker.
9. An excellent communicator.
10. Objective and outcome focused.