

REPORT FOR DECISION

DECISION OF:	HUMAN RESOURCES AND APPEALS PANEL
DATE:	10 th December 2020
SUBJECT:	Chief Officer Recruitment
REPORT FROM:	Geoff Little, Chief Executive Officer
CONTACT OFFICER:	Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive
TYPE OF DECISION:	Council
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain
SUMMARY:	In consideration of work undertaken around the Council Constitution and governance arrangements and also learning from recent recruitment exercises, this report outlines a proposed revised Chief Officer Recruitment Policy and makes recommendations for adoption.
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	<p>It is recommended that, subject to Trades Unions engagement, the revised approach to Chief Officer recruitment is adopted with immediate effect.</p> <p>It is also recommended that a training programme is scoped and developed for all parties involved in executive recruitment.</p>
IMPLICATIONS:	
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	<p>Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework?</p> <p>Yes</p>
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	There are no financial implications arising from the proposal
Equality/Diversity implications:	
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	The proposed Chief Officer recruitment policy is in line with the delegations under the Council's Constitution and is

	appropriate for recruitment to such posts. All recruitment must also comply with requirements for ensuring equality and diversity.
Wards Affected:	N/a
Scrutiny Interest:	None

TRACKING/PROCESS**DIRECTOR: Deputy Chief Executive**

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
	✓		
Scrutiny Committee	Committee	Council	
	✓ HRA		

1.0 BACKGROUND**1.1**

List of Background Papers:**Contact details:** Lynne Ridsdale Ext 5002**E:mail:** l.ridsdale@bury.gov.uk

1. Background & Context

The Council's Constitution is being updated and, within that, a new Employment Panel will be created to replace the Human Resources and Appeals Panel, which will take responsibility for the recruitment to all Chief Officer posts. A Chief Officer is defined as the Chief Executive; their direct reports and their direct reports. To support the new Panel it is helpful to set out standard process for Chief Officer appointments.

There has also been learning from recent senior officer appointments including the Executive Director Children and Young People; Assistant Director Operations - Strategy and the post of Executive Director of Strategic Commissioning, following which a formal complaint was received. A number of new appointments are scheduled for the coming weeks.

This paper sets out clarity on the proposed future approach, taking account of issues identified in recent campaigns which included:

- **Lack of clarity about candidate scoring** including the use of a benchmark score and scoring of stakeholder feedback during the assessment centre
- Challenges in the safe and transparent management of **conflicts of interest** with a "blind" shortlisting process. The use of anonymised candidate identifiers during the process has also been confusing at times
- Panel questioning which was not **equality and diversity proofed**. The need for a process which furthers the Council's objectives under the Public Sector Equality Duty is reinforced with the recent independent equalities review and forthcoming inclusion strategy
- A lack of clarity about the **decision making remit of Officers and Members** at different stages of the process

It has also been identified that Council assessors (Elected Members and Officers) have not benefitted from recent training

2. Future process

Appended are two proposed documents to form the basis of future recruitment policy for chief officer posts:

- The proposed corporate assessment approach for all Chief Officer appointments
- A Campaign Assessment Framework which will be completed for every recruitment exercise prior to commencement and sets out the timescales, tests to be applied at each stage of the process.

Key points which underpin this approach are proposed as follows.

- The Recruiting Manager will take overall accountability for each campaign. The manager will agree the **Campaign Assessment Framework** with the Cabinet Member HR at the beginning of the process and share this with the Appointment Panel before recruitment commences. The manager will be responsible for ongoing briefings of relevant stakeholders including the portfolio holder, staff and the Trades Unions and managing the candidate after appointment until start date including agreement of starting salary.

- Named **Human Resources** support will be allocated to support every campaign and provide technical advice to panels. The HR Team will arrange and liaise with the recruitment/search consultants, if used; draft and place the advertisement; advise on assessment tools; arrange assessment panels and associated logistics and provide technical advisors to Panels. HR will also ensure all pre-employment checks are complete and manage the on-boarding and induction process including final agreement from the Cabinet/Council
- The Portfolio Holder and Cabinet Member for HR will determine the **Appointment Panel** for each post. The Panel will be the decision maker at shortlisting, assessment centre and final appointment stages and will normally comprise
 - up to 5 members of the new Employment Panel of 9 Members, together with
 - the Executive Director who is making the appointment, as technical advisor
- All Panel Members must be recruitment and selection **trained**, or able to evidence recent training from another organisation, before they are able to participate in a campaign
- Candidate identities will be disclosed on a confidential basis throughout the process in order to support the safe and transparent management of **declarations of interests** / disclosable relationships. HR will co-ordinate any declarations at the beginning of each process. In accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct, Panel Members (Officers and Members) may be required to withdraw from the exercise if candidates are family members or close personal relationships.
- Chief Officer recruitment will be an important opportunity to improve the representativeness of the workforce in accordance with the Council's **inclusion** strategy. Every campaign must include targeting advice / advertising to reach all parts of the community
- Every campaign begins with agreement of the "long list" of applications which are put forward to a technical assessment, to establish the ability to do the role. The **"long list" process** is an application "paper sift" which is drafted by the Recruiting Executive Director and agreed by the **Cabinet Member for HR** (out of committee).
- The **Appointment Panel will agree the shortlist** of applications from those longlisted, with regards the application form and technical assessment feedback. Candidates will only be recommended to the Appointment Panel for shortlist if they have been found **technically appointable** by the Cabinet Member at long list
- Shortlisted candidates are then subject to an assessment centre comprising tests/further assessment as appropriate to the role. The Appointment Panel receives **general feedback from the assessment centre** but tests are not normally scored. The Employment Panel may de-select shortlisted candidates based on the nature of feedback received, ie consistent feedback from every assessment that performance was sub optimal.

- **Final Panel** assessment will normally involve a presentation question and series of competency-based questions. HR will co-ordinate the agreement of a Panel score for each question for each candidate, which produces an aggregate score and ranking for each candidate. Benchmark scores will not be used.
- **Offers of employment will normally be made in order** and are subject to final sign off from other members as follows:
 - Cabinet approval of preferred candidates
 - Additional Council approval of designated appointments to statutory posts (ie Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer)

3 Recommendations

The approach above clarifies the decision making process but remains consistent with council's constitution and HR policy base. It is therefore recommended that the Trades Unions are engaged about these points of clarification but the approach is adopted with immediate effect and included within the current HR policy updates.

It is also recommended that a training programme is scoped and developed for all parties involved in executive recruitment. Penna have agreed to provide an initial session for Cabinet Members; opposition spokespersons for HR and Chief Officers.

Appendix 1: Corporate Assessment Approach – part of recruitment policy

Stage	Action	Scoring	Decision maker
Preparation	Campaign Assessment Framework agreed	N/A	Cabinet Member HR & Corporate Affairs in consultation with Recruiting Officer -out of committee
1 – Long List	Application long list against person spec	Applications marked against person spec	Cabinet Member HR & Corporate Affairs in consultation with Recruiting Officer -out of committee
2 – Technical Assessment	Technical Interview or test	Assessment scored against person spec by technical assessor	
3 – Short list	Panel receive longlist feedback: Application & technical test Shortlist agreed	Technical assessment & application scores	Appointment Panel – constituted meeting
4– Assessment Centre	Competency assessments eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder panels Executive Director interview Scenario tests Verbal/numeric reasoning tests Psychometric assessment 	Qualitative feedback provided; exercises not normally scored	Appointment Panel Option to de-select candidates from process based on qualitative feedback provided
5 – Final Panel	Presentation & competency-based questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Members score questions individually agreed panel score for each question; candidates ranked 	Appointment Panel

Appendix 2 – Campaign Assessment Framework

Post	
Recruiting Director:	
Background/Key deliverables of role	
Date of Advertisement Media used	
Details of Executive Search, if used	
Technical test Assessor Date	
Assessment Centre. Date:	
Stakeholder Panel & areas to explore Scored / General Feedback (Delete)	Other tests Scored / General Feedback (Delete)
Final Panel. Date:	
Presentation	Competency-based questions