

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL

November 9th 2022

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Authority to recruit to the post of Corporate Director – Strategy and Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

To seek authority to recruit to the post of Corporate Director - Strategy and Corporate services.

Background

Upon notice of the retirement of the former Corporate Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Council approved arrangements to recruit to an amended post of Corporate Director Finance and Strategic Programmes in May 2021.

In July 2021, Council considered advice provided by the Special Appointments Committee that had overseen the recruitment and selection process. It was noted that the level of interest in the post had been very limited (6 applicants), consistent with experience for similar posts across the wider local government community. Furthermore, the Committee did not consider it possible to make a recommendation to Council to make an appointment to the Corporate Director post at that time.

Having accepted that position, Council went on to consider four options available to address the requirement to appoint a suitably qualified person to fulfil the role of s151 Officer. Council subsequently determined that a new Chief Finance Officer would be established to fulfil this requirement and confirmed Mr Huw Jones into the new role. The Head of Finance post was subsequently deleted from the establishment.

The Chief Finance Officer role reports directly to the Chief Executive, alongside the Chief Digital Officer, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of People and Organisational Development and the three corporate directors.

It is now some fifteen months since the corporate director role was advertised. In that time, the Council has moved from Covid-19 crisis response and is transitioning into recovery; the Local Government and Elections Act has placed a number of additional duties on the Chief Executive (including new regional duties associated with the Corporate Joint Committee); there is an unprecedented level of developer interest in

NPT; as well as new challenges posed by the cost of living crisis, war in Ukraine and global energy crisis.

It is now considered timely to recruit to the vacant corporate director role. This will provide resilience at chief officer level at a time of considerable change for the Council. A draft Job Description and Person Specification for the proposed role of Corporate Director – Strategy and Corporate Services is attached.

Recruitment Arrangements

The Council's Constitution sets out that the appointment of a Corporate Director, is the responsibility of full Council. The Special Appointments Committee (SAC) has responsibility for preparing a short-list of qualified applicants. The Local Authorities Standing Orders (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2014 sets out the requirement for local authorities to advertise all vacant posts with a remuneration package that exceeds £100k per annum. The salary that currently applies to the post of Director of Strategy and Corporate Services is £111,485 to £120,224 per annum (subject to any national pay award that may be agreed and applied w.e.f. 1st April 2021). It is proposed to advertise the position via national advertising and online media.

Financial Impact

The cost of the post can be met from existing salary budgets.

Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA is attached.

Workforce Impact

This proposal will ensure there is sufficient chief officer capacity to respond to the range of strategic issues requiring attention whilst also strengthening the Council's succession planning and career pathways into chief officer roles.

Legal Impact

The proposal complies with relevant employment legislation and council employment policy and procedure. The Council's Constitution sets out Officer Employment Rules designed to conform with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") as amended by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 ("the Amending Regulations"). Some of the Rules are also locally determined but in the event of any conflict with the Regulations, the latter shall prevail. The Regulations under which the Rules are made cannot be amended other than by legislation.

Risk Management Impacts

Without action there is a risk that there will be insufficient chief officer capacity to deal with the range of strategic issues facing the Council, impacting negatively on the Council's sustainability.

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

That Council authorises the Chief Executive to initiate recruitment to the post.

Reason for Proposed Decision

To ensure there is sufficient chief officer capacity in place to provide effective leadership of the Council.

Implementation of Decision

For immediate implementation.

Appendices

Job Description and Person Specification – Corporate Director Strategy and Corporate Services