

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	31 July 2023
Report of the	-	Senior Officer Appointments Panel / Leader of the Council
Subject	-	Appointment of the Chief Executive

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That

- 1) the recommendation made by the Senior Officer Appointments Panel at the meeting on 26 July 2023 to appoint Lorna Ford to the position of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service for Rother District Council be approved, with immediate effect; and
 - 2) Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Regeneration be designated as Interim Monitoring Officer; and
 - 3) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to appoint an external Interim Monitoring Officer (to replace Joe Powell) in due course, until a permanent appointment can be made.
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members on the proposed appointment of a permanent Chief Executive, following consideration by the Senior Officer Appointments Panel (hereafter referred to as “the Panel”) at its meeting on 26 July 2023 and to consider the recommendation of that Panel accordingly.
2. The post of Chief Executive is a key strategic post that leads Rother District Council and is required to oversee the delivery of the organisational priorities. The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service and has overall responsibility for the management and coordination of the employees appointed by the Authority. The post holder is also designated as the Council’s Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
3. The recruitment process has been carried out in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out at Part 4-8 of the Council’s Constitution.

Background and Process

4. Solace in Business were appointed as recruitment consultants and were tasked to identify a representative diverse pool of appropriately experienced and talented individuals capable of leading Rother District Council and to secure their interest in the post.
5. The following process began week commencing 5 June 2023 through executive search and supplemented by advertising on the Solace website via a microsite, MJ Journal, LinkedIn; 14 applications were received for the role.
6. Solace in Business conducted an initial sifting of applications and presented these to the longlist panel. This was made up of the Leader, Councillor Doug

Oliver, Deputy Leader, Councillor Sue Prochak, Deputy Leader, Councillor Christine Bayliss, Leader of the Green party, Councillor Polly Gray and Representative of the Conservative party, Councillor Eleanor Kirby-Green (the Senior Officer Appointments Panel).

7. From this meeting, four candidates were longlisted and interviewed to test the technical competence of each candidate to carry out the role of a CEO. These interviews were conducted by Solace and the Technical Assessor and an interview report was written and presented to the shortlist panel.
8. The shortlisting meeting was attended by Solace in Business, the Senior Officer Appointments Panel and the Human Resources Manager, Maria Benford. The outcome of this being that three candidates were presented to the Panel on the 26 July 2023.
9. A confidential interview pack was considered by the members of the Panel on 26 July 2023. Councillor Eleanor Kirby-Green was substituted by Councillor Lizzie Hacking on the interview Panel.
10. At the interviews candidates were asked to provide a Senior Staff Panel with a 10 minute presentation on 'what they could bring to the role of Chief Executive for Rother District Council and how they would work with members and staff to develop and embed a culture of continuous improvement to improve outcomes for our residents' and to answer follow up questions to explore their suitability for the role.
11. Following the interviews held on 26 July 2023, the Senior Officer Appointment Panel's recommendation is to appoint Lorna Ford, the Council's current Interim Chief Executive to the substantive post with immediate effect.
12. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1193 (SI No. 202) in relation to the appointment of the Head of Paid Service, all Executive Members of the Council must be given an opportunity to object to the proposed recommendation for the appointment. This has been undertaken and no objections have been received.
13. Given the new arrangements, it is recommended that Joe Powell, Head of Service for Housing and Regeneration, is designated with immediate effect as Interim Monitoring Officer.
14. It is further recommended that the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to appoint an external Interim Monitoring Officer (to replace Joe Powell), in due course, until a permanent appointment can be made.

Councillor Doug Oliver
Leader of the Council

On behalf of the Senior Officer Appointments Panel