

---

## **APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

---

**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 10 January 2017 from 7.00pm - 7.54pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Duncan Dewar-Whalley (Substitute for Councillor Bowles), Harrison, Alan Horton, Gerry Lewin (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Ken Pugh (Substitute for Councillor Mike Cosgrove) and David Simmons.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Katherine Bescoby and Abdool Kara.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Cameron Beart, Roger Truelove and Mike Whiting.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Bowles and Mike Cosgrove.

### **1096 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure, as set out on the agenda.

### **1097 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Appointments Committee Meeting held on 27 April 2010 (Minute Nos. 908 – 912) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **1098 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### **1099 INTERIM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded Members that the purpose of the meeting was to make recommendations to Council, on the proposals for interim management arrangements for the appointment of an interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

The Chairman proposed the recommendations within the report, which were seconded by Councillor David Simmons.

Members asked questions regarding: the press release that had been issued; whether the report should have been confidential; whether there had been any discussions about what was wanted from an interim or permanent Chief Executive; and why the interim term suggested was until September 2018?

The Chairman advised that progression of work required continuity and they did not want any substantive change of course, and a lot of resource would be taken up in the recruitment of a Chief Executive. In addition, the face of local government was

changing and so an appointment until September 2018 would give time for the 'dust to settle' and for consideration to be given to the role of Chief Executive. The Chief Executive advised that salaries over £50k were in the public domain and that the press release was to coincide with the report being published and did not suggest that a decision had been made. The term of the appointment was to reflect uncertainty ahead in terms of devolution and funding challenges for local government.

Further questions were asked regarding why the Appointments Sub-Committee had not met since 2010, when a Director of Regeneration had been appointed since then; whether the individual proposed was qualified for the job; whether there would be any reviews during the appointment; whether the grade of the Chief Executive post should be reviewed as it was one of the highest in the County and there was potential to make greater savings; whether it was necessary for the Returning Officer to have experience at an election count; and referring to paragraph 4.2, whether there was confidence that there would be a recognised leader?

The Chairman and Chief Executive responded by saying that the Panel for the appointment of the Director of Regeneration had effectively been the Appointments Sub-Committee, which had made a recommendation direct to Council. The Chairman referred to the longstanding service of the Director of Corporate Services, who currently stood in for the Chief Executive as necessary, and said he had no doubt that the individual could do the job. In respect of savings, the Chairman advised that there would be consequential changes as a result of the proposal and so further savings would be made which were not currently reflected in the report.

The Chief Executive expected that there would be reviews built-in as was standard, and anticipated regular meetings with the Leader, but clarified that there would not be a probationary period. He acknowledged the need for an independent pay review of the post but this should be done independently of the proposal being considered by the Sub-Committee. In respect of the Returning Officer appointment, he clarified that the Chief Executive's salary did include Returning Officer fees for Swale Borough and Parish elections, and so there would be additional costs if another officer was designated as the Returning Officer.

In response to further questions about consistency in the report, in particular as to whether the post was the Chief Executive or Interim Chief Executive, the Chief Executive undertook to review the wording before it was submitted to Council. He confirmed that the proposal was an interim arrangement for the post of Chief Executive, and that the post of Chief Executive was a permanent post until such time a formal decision was taken to delete it. Another Member suggested 'Acting Chief Executive' might be a more appropriate term.

In response to a question regarding the regulations that generated the conduct of the Chief Executive, the current Chief Executive said that he understood this would apply from day one of the interim appointment, but he undertook to clarify this.

Another question was asked regarding leadership qualities in difficult times, which the Chairman responded to by referring to business transformation in the way that services were delivered; deputising for the Chief Executive; and the importance of stability and certainty at this time to ensure projects remained on track.

In response to another question regarding what would be happening in 20 months' time, the Chairman advised that 20 months was a reasonable period for the interim appointment, to allow time to look at processes if that was considered necessary, as it took time and resource to recruit permanently and there were risks involved in doing so. A discussion ensued concerning the progression of staff in-house and a Member asked whether other members of staff had had an opportunity to apply for the post? Questions were also asked about arrangements for the backfilling of the post of Director of Corporate Services. Regarding backfilling, the Chief Executive referred to Appendix I of the report, and added that he was certain that no other staff would have applied for the interim appointment. Another Member considered that the proposal was sending the right message, and the Council had good staff and this showed that there was opportunity for staff to progress in-house rather than leaving for a promotion elsewhere. In this, the Council was in a fortunate position and there would continue to be regular reviews as at present.

In summing up, the seconder referred to the length of time taken to recruit a Chief Executive; the need to give an interim appointment time in the job; and the Director of Corporate Services' experience of transformation.

The Chairman thanked Members for their questions and put the proposals to the vote.

**Recommended:**

**(1) That the Council does not appoint a permanent Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service at this time.**

**(2) That the Council appoints an Interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service, initially for the period 1 February 2017 to 30 September 2018.**

**(3) That the current Director of Corporate Services be seconded into this role, payable at the bottom point of salary scale 14.**

**(4) That the Interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service be appointed as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, initially for the period 1 February 2017 to 30 September 2018.**

**(5) That the Council notes the minor structural changes required as a consequence of these proposals.**

**(6) That the appropriate revisions are made to amend and update the scheme of delegations to officers, including proper and authorised officers and designated posts in the Constitution, as appropriate.**

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel