

Joint Appointments Committee Report

Author: Sally Kipping, HR Manager, Waverley Borough Council

Tel: 01483 553499

Email: sally.kipping@waverley.gov.uk

Date: 22 August 2022

## Appointment of Joint Section 151 Officer

### Recommendation to Committee

The Joint Appointments Committee (JAC) is asked to consider the appointment of the Joint Executive Head of Finance (S151 Officer) and, where appropriate, to recommend an appointment for confirmation at the extraordinary meetings of both councils scheduled to take place in September 2022. Any formal offer of appointment is subject to no material or well-founded objection being made by either of the two Council Leaders on behalf of their respective Executives in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.

Therefore, following the assessment process with the candidate for the Joint Executive Head of Finance (S151 Officer) post, the JAC is recommended:

- (1) To consider whether an appointment to the Joint Executive Head of Finance (S151 Officer) post should be agreed for recommendation to the full meetings of both Councils, which will be made subject to no material or well-founded objection being made by either of the two Council Leaders on behalf of their respective Executives.
- (2) Subject to (1) above, to note that the Joint Chief Executive will conditionally offer the role to the candidate accordingly and progress HR procedures in line with the Councils' relevant policies;

#### Reason for recommendation:

To appoint a permanent S151 Officer for Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.

#### **Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication?**

Yes, Appendix 3.

- (a) The content of Appendix 3 is to be treated as exempt from the Access to Information publication rules because the process for candidate selection will involve the disclosure, or likely disclosure of personal information about the candidate and is therefore exempt from publication by virtue of paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as follows:

- (1) "Information relating to any individual".
- (4) "Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or officer-holders under, the authority."
- (b) The content is restricted to the members of the Joint Appointments Committee.
- (c) It is not anticipated that the exempt information can be expected to be made available for public inspection.
- (d) The decision to maintain the exemption may be challenged by any person at the point at which the Committee is invited to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting to consider the exempt information.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 In the light of the decision of Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils to form a Joint Management Team (JMT), the JAC will be required to agree the formal appointment of the S151 Officer as per the role profile attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 In July and August 2021, Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils both considered options for collaboration and agreed (a) to put in place governance arrangements for the partnership, and (b) to create a JMT comprising Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service. The JMT would then be tasked with bringing forward business cases for further collaboration. A Joint Appointments Committee of three councillors from each council was established.
- 1.3 In November 2021, both councils appointed Tom Horwood as the Joint Chief Executive and he started in this role on 1 December 2021.
- 1.4 Following a formal consultation and selection process, in July 2022 both councils approved, on the recommendation of the JAC, the appointment of three joint strategic directors, namely Annie Righton, Ian Doyle, and Dawn Hudd with effect from 1 August 2022.
- 1.5 Every council must appoint the statutory roles of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer (i.e. chief financial officer as per Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972), Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. These are Full Council appointments. The Joint Chief Executive has been appointed Head of Paid Service, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. The creation of the JMT will necessitate Full Council approval for the roles of Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer once the selection process has concluded.
- 1.6 The JAC's role, as set out in its terms of reference, is:

*“Adopting and exercising such of the functions of Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council (“the councils”) as can be delegated by those councils in respect of the appointment of the councils’ Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and any Joint Statutory Officer and Director posts as are covered by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) or any successor regulations.”*

- 1.7 Regarding the statutory offices of Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, the JAC undertakes the appointment process and makes a recommendation to both Full Council meetings. The JAC is being asked to consider an application for the permanent position of Executive Head of Finance which incorporates the S151 Officer role.
- 1.8 Regarding the appointment of the S151 officer, the JAC undertakes an assessment of Leadership Competency as per the role profile. An assessment of technical skill will also be undertaken by the relevant portfolio holders (or their substitute) and an independent S151 Officer from another Council. Feedback from the technical skill assessment will be available for the consideration by the JAC at its meeting.
- 1.9 The final appointment will be “subject to no material or well-founded objection to the making of an offer of appointment being received by either Leader on behalf of their respective executives.”
- 1.10 In advance of the meeting on 22 August, members of the JAC will have been briefed on the proposed new JMT structure and process. They have already made appointments for Directors, and this committee meeting is for the purpose of appointing one of the statutory officer positions. The timetable below is being followed:
  - August-September: appointments process for Head of Service roles
  - September: extraordinary Council meetings appoint statutory office holders if required
  - 1 October: Heads of Service in post
  - October: commence external recruitments if there are any Head of Service vacancies
- 1.11 This meeting of the JAC will follow an interview and technical assessment with the candidate who has expressed an interest in the Executive Head of Finance role. The formal meeting to agree the appointment and (if required) to make a recommendation to the Full Council meetings will commence after the interview and technical assessment have taken place.
- 1.12 Current employees in scope who qualified for the role of Executive Head of Finance have been consulted formally for 30 days as per the councils’ relevant human resources policies and given the opportunity

to make alternative suggestions. Unison, as the councils' recognised trades union, has also been consulted.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 The Joint Executive Head of Finance will play a pivotal role in the delivery of Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils' aspirations set out in the respective Corporate Plan and Corporate Strategy through the assessment of financial risk, the provision of high-quality financial advice to Councillors and to other members of the JMT. The appointment reflects the next step in both councils' strategic aim of exploring shared opportunities with other local authorities for the benefit of local residents.

## **3. The appointments process**

- 3.1 The Councils seek to recruit a Joint Executive Head of Finance who will form part of the new JMT. The existing Head of Service post in Waverley Borough Council and the existing S151 Officer post covering both councils will be deleted following this process.
- 3.2 Consultation with the Heads of Service ended at 17:00 on 5 August 2022 and the existing Head of Service has until 17:00 on 19 August to express an interest in the role. The role has been ringfenced to the existing Head of Service to minimise the risk of redundancy, and due to the essential accountancy qualification that is required for the role.
- 3.3 The selection process consists of the following steps:
- (a) Expression of interest and current copy of CV
  - (b) Leadership Exercise
  - (c) Presentation to the JAC and Joint Chief Executive followed by questions and answers
  - (d) Competency based questions with the JAC and Joint Chief Executive
  - (e) Technical skills assessment of financial expertise and experience by independent S151 officer together with the Financial Portfolio Holders from both Councils (or their appointed deputy).

Should an expression of interest be received, a copy will be sent under separate cover, together with a copy of the CV of the applicant, to JAC members (the EXEMPT Appendix 3) shortly prior to the interview date of 22 August 2022. A timetable will also be included at that point.

- 3.4 The JAC, supported by the Joint Chief Executive, will assess the applicant using the process above with the interview to be held on 22 August 2022.

#### **4. Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Selection Process for Heads of Service into the Joint Management Team
- Appendix 2: Role profile and person specification for the Executive Head of Finance (S151 Officer)
- Appendix 3: (To follow) Timetable of interview, expressions of interest and CVs of applicant (EXEMPT)