

Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils

Report to: Joint Senior Staff Committee

Date: 28 March 2024

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Interim HR Manager, Waverley Borough Council

Author: Jon Formby

Tel: 01483 523499

Email: jon.formby@waverley.gov.uk

Report Status: Open

Update on Senior Staffing Appointments

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 16 February 2024, the Leaders of the Councils reached an agreement with both the Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing (who was at that time the Interim Joint Chief Executive) and the Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance, that to allow an investigation to be carried out they would step back from their duties and the next steps would need to be considered by the Joint Senior Staff Committee.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 29 February 2024, the Joint Senior Staff Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with immediate effect to approve any interim appointments, of up to 6 months, usually in the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee, subject to consultation with the Leaders of both Councils, and to details of any such interim appointments being reported to the Joint Senior Staff Committee for transparency purposes and for the Monitoring Officer to amend both Councils' constitutions to reflect this delegation.

- 1.3 Following the departure of Michael Coughlin after a three-week secondment from Surrey County Council in the role of part-time Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment, the Head of Paid Service secured the services of Julian Higson through Penna to be Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment for a three-month period from 6 March 2024 to 6 June 2024. This is a five-day working week at a daily rate of £986 plus VAT, inclusive of expenses.
- 1.4 The additional interim arrangements made by the Head of Paid Service at the point of the two Strategic Directors voluntarily stepping back at that time remain in place, with: Organisational Development reporting to the Chief Executive; Housing and Environmental Services reporting to the Interim Strategic Director for Housing and Environment; and all other service areas reporting into the Strategic Director for Place.
- 1.5 The Head of Paid Service has proposed further interim management arrangements below JMT level to be put in place whilst the recruitment processes for an Executive Head of Environmental Services and Executive Head of Housing have been undertaken.
- 1.6 An offer for a permanent Executive Head of Environmental Services has now been made to Marcus Harvey, who will be joining Waverley and Guildford on Monday 17 June 2024.
- 1.7 An offer for a permanent Executive Head of Housing has now been made. Subject to the completion of the normal Executive consultation processes set out in paragraph 9.1, this appointment will be confirmed.
- 1.8 A new role of Head of Business Improvement at Guildford has been advertised. This role will be a Guildford role in the first instance, focusing on the delivery of an improvement plan in response to the Guildford SOLACE report. Because this new post will report directly to the Chief Executive it is defined in law as a 'Non-Statutory Chief Officer'. Under paragraph 3.6 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the appointment of such officers falls within the remit of the Joint Senior Staff Committee. However, the Committee is able to

delegate its responsibility in that respect to the Head of Paid Service if it chooses to. Recommendation 2.4 below asks the Committee to approve this delegation.

2. Recommendation to Committee

The Joint Senior Staff Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the appointment, under delegated authority by the Head of Paid Service, of Julian Higson to the role of Interim Strategic Director for a 3-month period from 6 March to 6 June 2024.
- 2.2 Note the offer of the permanent role of Executive Head of Environmental Services to Marcus Harvey with a start date of Monday 17 June 2024.
- 2.3 Note the offer of the permanent role of Executive Head of Housing (subject to the completion of the normal Executive consultation processes set out in paragraph 9.1)
- 2.4 Delegate responsibility for appointing the GBC Head of Business Improvement to the Head of Paid Service.
- 2.5 Approve the cost of interim support as set out in the financial implications paragraph below.

3. Reasons for Recommendation:

- 3.1. To ensure adequate senior staffing cover is in place for the functioning of Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils.

4. Exemption from publication

- 4.1 This report is not exempt.

5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1 To note and report back the changes made to the Senior Staffing Arrangements following the delegation of powers to the Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive to ensure that Guildford and Waverley

Borough Councils have sufficient senior staffing arrangements in place.

The Joint Senior Staff Committee'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.”

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 Gaps in senior level resource present a significant strategic risk to both authorities. For this reason, the Head of Paid Service has sought to fill key gaps on an interim and permanent basis.

7. Background

- 7.1. The ending of the secondment of Michael Coughlin from Surrey County Council, meant there was a requirement to source additional interim Strategic Director support for the Corporate Management Board quickly to ensure adequate resource.
- 7.2. The interim recruitment of Julian Higson as Strategic Director through Penna for Housing and Environmental Services meant an experienced Director level candidate could be sourced quickly with experience of comparable Director level roles at Brentwood and Rochford District Council, London Borough of Harrow and Bristol City Council.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Under the terms of the interim arrangement with Penna the cost of interim Strategic Director, Julian Higson will be charged equally between Waverley and Guildford at a rate of £986 per day plus VAT for a 3 month period.

- 8.2 The Joint Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing and Joint Strategic Director, Transformation and Governance remain on full pay whilst the investigation is carried out.
- 8.3 The advertisements for the Strategic Director of Finance and Head of Business Improvement are through our existing mechanisms for advertising roles and so do not require any additional funding.
- 8.4 The costs of advertising for the roles of Executive Head of Environmental Services and Executive Head of Housing were through direct advertising with the Municipal Journal and managed by the Waverley Human Resource Team at a cost of £5,950 plus VAT for the media and other costs covered within the existing salary budget.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Joint Strategic Director of Legal & Democratic Services has consulted both Executives to ask whether they would have any well-founded objections to the appointments in line with the Senior Officer Employment Rules and none have been received.

10. Human Resource Implications

- 10.1 The role of Strategic Director is an important senior role at the second level tier in the structure of the Joint Management Team at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.
- 10.2 The role of Executive Head of Service is an important senior role at the third level tier in the structure of the Joint Management Team at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 11.1 Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. There are no immediate equality, diversity, or inclusion implications in this report's recommendations. Impact assessments may be required as further collaboration proposals are developed and implemented and will be reported as appropriate.

12. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

12.1 The climate change emergency declaration and the urgent target for net zero carbon by 2030 is a critical objective for both councils. While no specific impacts on the climate emergency declaration have been identified as a consequence of this report's recommendations, the Councils will be assessing and prioritising the environmental, climate and carbon impacts of any proposals that emerge.

13. Background Papers

None

14. Appendices

None