

# Harborough District Council



## Report to Council Meeting of 18 September 2023

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Appointment of Chief Executive</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Rebecca Jenner, Head of HR</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Cllr Phil Knowles, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Strategy</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>A – Recommendation of the Member Appointment Panel (to be circulated once received)</b>

### Purpose of Report

1. This report informs Council of the progress made towards the appointment of a Chief Executive for the Council following a recruitment process.

### Recommendation

That Council:

- a. Approve the appointment of the preferred candidate selected by the Member Appointment Panel as Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer of the Council, as set out in Appendix A (to follow).

### Background

2. Council will recall that following the retirement of Norman Proudfoot from the role of Chief Executive with effect from February 2022, the Deputy Chief Executive, Liz Elliott, has acted up as the Interim Chief Executive, Interim Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer. This arrangement has been reviewed and extended by Council in June 2022, December 2022 and February 2023. It is due to expire on 31 December 2023.
3. During the period Ms Elliott has acted up as Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, Clive Mason, has acted up as Deputy Chief Executive.
4. Starfish Search were appointed to assist with the recruitment process for the vacant post of Chief Executive.

### Detail

5. The recruitment campaign for the post of Chief Executive closed on 23 July 2023 with 21 high quality applicants. The 10 strongest candidates were invited to attend a two-hour

technical interview designed to explore and test their experience, expertise and suitability for the role of Chief Executive. The interviews were conducted by a varied panel of interviewers.

6. The technical interview process enabled the identification of 4 candidates to be included on the shortlist for the final interview process. Shortlisting was a particularly difficult decision due to the calibre of all of those interviewed.
7. The two-day assessment centre considered all four candidates. Day one (7 September 2023) was an opportunity for the candidates to meet with some members and officers and for them to find out more about the Harborough District, what it's like to work and live here, key projects and challenges.
8. Day two (8 September 2023) was the final stage, comprising an interview and an individual presentation from the candidates. The shortlisted candidates were interviewed by the Member Appointment Panel convened by Council at its meeting on 23 July 2023.
9. The selection process was carried out in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Recruitment and Selection Policy.
10. Given the timing of this Council meeting and the conclusion of the recruitment process, it has not been possible to provide a written update on the outcome of the recruitment process for the dispatch of this agenda. However, further information as to the preferred candidate identified by the Members Appointment Panel will be circulated to members in advance of the meeting as Appendix A to the report.

## **Implications of Decisions**

### **Corporate Priorities**

11. The Council requires a permanent Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to represent and lead the Council and deliver its corporate priorities of place and community, economy, healthy lives and environment and sustainability for the benefit of the district.

### **Financial**

12. The post of Chief Executive already exists on the Council's establishment and is therefore budgeted for.

### **Legal**

13. The role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is fundamental for the Council and it is therefore important that this key role is filled without further delay.

### **Policy**

14. This report has no policy implications for the Council.

### **Environment and Climate**

15. Implementing the recommendations in the report should not adversely impact the Council's pledge to work towards achieving net zero carbon and may reinvigorate it by bringing in a new senior leader with new ideas.

### **Risk Management**

16. The Council has mitigated the risk of not having a permanent Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive by fortunately benefiting from having an experienced former chief executive in the post of Deputy Chief Executive, who was willing to act up into the post of interim Chief Executive. However, interim appointments are only a temporary solution and appointing a suitably qualified permanent candidate will mitigate risk to the authority by allowing the two officers currently acting up to return to their substantive posts.

### **Equalities Impact**

17. The recommendations in this report do not adversely impact upon equalities obligations – the recruitment process has been conducted in accordance with the Council's equalities and employment policies.

### **Consultation**

18. The approval of Council is required for the appointment of the Chief Executive therefore all members are consulted about the proposed candidate. Stakeholders of the Council were also included in the recruitment process.

