

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	18 OCTOBER 2022		
TITLE:	APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JASON BROCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
SERVICE:		WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 All councils are required to appoint a Head of Paid Service in accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act'). The Council's Constitution, Article 12, confirms that the Chief Executive is designated to carry out this role.
- 1.2 Following the retirement of the previous Chief Executive, and a rigorous recruitment and selection programme, the Personnel Committee Appointment Panel recommends that Jackie Yates be appointed as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 19 October 2022.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council approve the appointment of Jackie Yates as the Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 19 October 2022.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act') the Council must designate one of its officers to hold the statutory office of Head of Paid Service. The Head of the Paid Service is responsible for preparing reports on the way the local authority's staff are organised, on the authority's staffing needs and on the coordination of the way in which the authority's functions are discharged.

4. THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

4.1 The former Chief Executive, Peter Sloman, retired from the Council on 31 August 2022 after five years with the authority. Peter was an outstanding Chief Executive for the Council, and we wish him well in his retirement.

4.2 The Council's Constitution, Part 4 Rules of Procedure, sets out that the responsibility for the appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service rests with Council. The appointment will be co-ordinated and a recommendation made by the Personnel Committee, or by any other Committee or Sub-Committee authorised by Council or the Personnel Committee to make the appointment.

4.3 The membership of the cross-party Appointment Panel was coterminous with the Personnel Committee which comprises the following members:

- Cllr Jason Brock - Leader of the Council
- Cllr Tony Page - Deputy Leader of the Council
- Cllr Liz Terry - Lead Councillor for Corporate Services and Resources
- Cllr Jo Lovelock - Chair of Planning Applications Committee
- Cllr Clarence Mitchell - Conservative Group Leader

4.4 The role was advertised internally and externally via a recruitment agency, Solace in Business, with a closing date of 1 August 2022. Twenty-one applications were received which were 'long-listed' to ten candidates who were interviewed by an independent technical assessor, Jenny Rowlands, Chief Executive of Camden Council, together with the lead consultant from Solace in Business. Following these interviews, recommendations were reviewed by the Appointment Panel and five candidates were invited to an Assessment Day on 27 September 2022. One candidate withdrew before the assessment day for personal reasons.

4.5 The Assessment Day included a variety of exercises to give candidates the opportunity to show their skills in a range of situations. This provides a much more comprehensive overview of their strengths and areas for development than more traditional methods used in isolation. The assessments were:

- **Psychometric Profiling** - completed on-line prior to the assessment day
- **2-1 discussion** - with the Leader and Lead Member for Corporate Services and Resources
- **Fact-Find Exercise** - candidates were given a short summary of the immediate circumstances surrounding an organisational situation and were required to decide and recommend the action to be taken based on information gathered.
- **Written Exercise** - candidates were required to analyse information on an organisational situation and prepare a written briefing paper identifying priorities and their recommendations.
- **Presentation to Partners and Follow Up Q&A Session** - the panel comprised the Executive Chair of Brighter Futures for Children, the Chair

of Reading Buses, the Chief Executives of Launchpad Reading and the Alliance for Racial Cohesion and Equality (ACRE) and a representative from Reading's Economic and Destination Agency (REDA).

- **Reading Youth Council** - semi-structured Q&A session with a panel of young people.
- **Session with Members** - set up in a 'speed dating' structure, where candidates engaged with three groups of members on the Corporate Plan themes.

4.6 Candidates also had the opportunity to have lunch with members of the Senior Leadership Group and Trade Union Representatives. This was not part of the formal assessment.

4.7 Following a review of candidates' performance across all activities, the Appointment Panel decided to progress three candidates to the final stage of the selection process. This took place on 30 September 2022 and included a competency-based interview and a presentation delivered to the Appointment Panel.

4.8 At the conclusion of the above, rigorous selection process, the Appointment Panel recommends that Jackie Yates be appointed as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service on a permanent basis with effect from 19 October 2022. Jackie has been the Interim Chief Executive since mid-July following Peter Sloman's last day of service. Having joined the Council in 2018 as Executive Director of Resources, Jackie then became Deputy Chief Executive last year. From 2010 to 2018, Jackie was at Oxford City Council, most recently as Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services. Before that she was at Buckinghamshire County Council as Head of Finance and Procurement from 2008 to 2010 having been in that role as an interim from 2007 to 2008. She had Deputy and Assistant Head roles there back to 2003, before which she had more junior roles at Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire County Council. Jackie has a BA in Economic and Public Policy and is CIPFA qualified. She is an LGA Peer and is involved in voluntary work.

4.9 Jackie has significant experience as a leader in local government and the panel were impressed with her passion and commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes to our residents and customers.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is the most senior officer in the Council and will have responsibilities directly related to delivering the Council's strategic aims.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Not relevant for this report

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 This report is concerned with the appointment of the Chief Executive, in accordance with statutory requirements. There is no requirement for external consultation.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report because it deals with internal procedural matters only.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In accordance with Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act') the Council must designate one of its officers to hold the statutory office of Head of Paid Service. Failure to appoint a Head of Paid Service will put the Council in breach of its statutory obligation.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The cost of the recruitment process was met from within existing budgets and the salary of £170,000 per annum is the agreed salary for the Chief Executive post.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.