

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Employment Committee held on Wednesday, 15 February 2023 at 3.30 pm at the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Portsmouth

### **Present**

Councillor Simon Boshier (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Dave Ashmore  
Councillor Matthew Atkins  
Councillor Darren Sanders  
Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE

### **Officers Present**

David Williams, Chief Executive  
Natasha Edmunds, Director of Corporate Services  
Rochelle Williams, Assistant Director Human Resources  
Sue Page, Finance Manager  
Karen Martin, Local Democracy Officer

#### **1. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)**

Councillor Asghar Shar was present as Standing Deputy for the Labour Group.

#### **2. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**

There were none.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 (AI 3)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

#### **4. Appointment Sub-Committee and Recruitment Arrangements (AI 4)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson stated that he wished to place on record the Committee's thanks to David Williams, Chief Executive and Tristan

Samuels, Director of Regeneration for their achievements on behalf of the city. The Committee agreed.

Natasha Edmunds, Director of Corporate Resources, introduced the report and informed members that authority was sought for the establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee for an appointment to the role of Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service). She added that this was a statutory role reserved for full Council, that the Appointment Sub-Committee would act on behalf of full Council and the Employment Committee's recommendations would be subject to full Council approval. She informed members that the report also set out recommendations for delegating authority to the Chief Executive to appoint an interim Director of Regeneration and that the process of seeking a permanent replacement will take place once the new Chief Executive is in post.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson suggested three amendments to the recommendations, relating to:

- Widening the pool of councillors eligible for appointment to the Appointments Sub-Committee to all members of the Council;
- The timing for a report to the Employment Committee setting out proposals for a future structure of the Regeneration Directorate to be no later than May/June 2023 rather than "summer 2023" as proposed; and
- In relation to the appointment of a new Chief Executive, the close working relationship with Gosport Council be recognised in a non-decision making way given that the incumbent is Chief Executive of both Councils.

The Committee discussed the suggested amendments in turn.

The Vice Chair agreed that widening the pool for the interview panel to all councillors would be beneficial. Councillor Sanders noted that councillors appointed to the interview panel needed to have experience of interviewing candidates and he enquired about the timing of interviews. Natasha Edmunds informed the Committee that interviews would likely take place after the elections and Annual Council in May. Councillor Sanders commented this was sensible as the Council currently had three independent members and they should also be represented on the panel.

The Vice Chair agreed that "summer 2023" was vague and suggested a deadline of the end of June. Natasha Edmunds advised that the Employment Committee normally met each July. Councillor Sanders noted that HR capacity would need to be considered, that July should be the latest date and that a special Committee meeting could take place earlier if necessary. It was agreed that the words "in summer 2023" be amended to read, "by no later than June/ July 2023".

Councillor Sanders noted that it would be helpful if the appointment of an interim Director of Regeneration had democratic oversight. David Williams, Chief Executive, confirmed that Group Leaders would be consulted although the decision to appoint would be delegated to him as Chief Executive. It was agreed to amend the recommendation to reflect this.

The Vice Chair noted that in the past candidates have had extensive opportunities for engaging with elected members as well as visits around Portsmouth. He enquired if this would include opportunities to visit Gosport in relation to the appointment of a new Chief Executive. Natasha Edmunds informed the Committee that opportunities to engage with several partner organisation including in health and other Local Authorities would be an important part of the process for the candidates as well as the council.

Councillor Sanders noted that it was not certain that the new Chief Executive would also be appointed as Chief Executive of Gosport. David Williams commented that although there was a section 113 agreement in place, both councils remained sovereign. He added although Portsmouth has an interest in perpetuating the relationship, the candidates may not wish to take on both roles and Gosport may decide to make a separate appointment. He added that Gosport could make interim arrangements and decide later about the Portsmouth candidate taking on both roles.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson suggested adding the following words to the recommendation: "Gosport council to be invited to be part of the recruitment process in an informal and non-decision making manner". Members were minded to agree.

Members of the Committee discussed the potential for the interim Director of Regeneration to advise the council on the potential restructure of the Regeneration Directorate. It was agreed that it would be sensible to revisit the Transport Review report (August 2022). Natasha Edmunds confirmed that the report to Employment Committee which members had earlier agreed would be presented to the Committee by no later than June/July 2023, would set out proposals for a future restructure taking account of the Transport Review report considered by the Committee in August 2022.

**The Committee then RESOLVED that:**

- 1) In relation to the appoint to the role of Chief Executive, the Employment Committee:**
  - **Noted the requirement to recruit to the post of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) following the resignation of the current incumbent.**
  - **Delegated the appointment to the role of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) to an Appointments Sub-Committee to act on behalf of Full Council.**
  - **Noted that the Appointments Sub-Committee selection decision will be subject to Full Council approval.**
  - **Agreed the composition of the Appointments Sub-Committee as:**
    - **Leader of the Council**
    - **Group leader(s) of the opposition group(s)**
    - **Such members of the full Council as are required to ensure political proportionality of the Sub-Committee, as nominated by respective group leaders.**

- **Gosport Borough Council to be invited to engage in the recruitment process in an informal and non-decision making manner.**
  - **Delegated the candidate search process and administrative matters to the Director of Corporate Services/ Assistant Director of Human Resources.**
  - **Placed on record its thanks to David Williams for the long service and dedication to the residents of the city of Portsmouth and the staff and members of the city council during his 16 years as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.**
- 2) In relation to the post of Director of Regeneration, the Employment Committee:**
- **Agreed to seek an interim appointment to start no later than end April.**
  - **Requested a report to Employment Committee by no later than June/July 2023 setting out proposals for a future structure taking account of the report tabled at the Committee in August 2022.**
  - **Delegated authority to appoint an interim Director of Regeneration to the Chief Executive after consultation with Group leaders.**
  - **Placed on record its thanks to Tristan Samuels for his achievements and dedication to the city and its residents during his time as Director of Regeneration.**

The meeting concluded at 4.09 pm.

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Chair