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## **Appointment to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service**

**Report by Director People Performance & Change**

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**Scottish Borders Council**

**26 January 2023**

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### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates Council on the appointment of a new Chief Executive.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 12 July 2022, the Council approved the establishment of an Appointment Committee which was delegated full authority to appoint a permanent new Chief Executive, following the appropriate assessment and interviewing procedures.
- 1.3 The Appointment Committee conducted interviews for the post of Chief Executive on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and unanimously agreed to the appointment of David Robertson to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Council notes:-**
  - (a) the details of the recruitment exercise for a Chief Executive; and**
  - (b) the appointment of David Robertson to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, which commenced with immediate effect.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for all functions and responsibilities of the Council and holds the statutory positions of Head of Paid Service for the Council and Returning Officer for the Scottish Borders area.
- 3.2 The Council's Scheme of Administration provides that the appointment of the Chief Executive is a matter for full Council, or a Committee specifically appointed for this purpose.
- 3.3 At its meeting on 12th July 2022, the Council approved the establishment of an Appointment Committee comprising 9 members of Council, with the Committee reflecting political and gender balance:
  - (i) Executive Member, Service Delivery and Transformation, (chair);
  - (ii) Convener of the Council;
  - (iii) Leader of the Council;
  - (iv) two further members of the Administration; and
  - (v) four members from out-with the Administration

### **4 RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

- 4.1 Internal advice on the recruitment and appointment process for the Chief Executive was provided by the Director People Performance & Change. External advice on the process was provided by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

#### **Advertising Process**

- 4.2 The post was advertised within MJ, which is the market leading title in terms of reaching senior local authority professionals, on 10th November and again in the issue of 17<sup>th</sup> November. An editorial feature in the form of an interview supported the advert's first appearance with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Euan Jardine. The role was also advertised via the Guardian online and on Myjobscotland. The campaign also tapped into social media, promoting the role via LinkedIn as well as via the Solace in Business website and Twitter feed.
- 4.3 The campaign was supported by a recruitment microsite, which enabled candidates to access detailed information about the role and the process; in addition Solace carried out extensive Executive Search activity.

#### **Shortlisting, Assessment and Interviews**

- 4.4 Following the closing date for applications, a short-listing meeting of the Appointment Committee took place.
- 4.5 Prior to interview short-listed candidates undertook psychometric, cognitive and management style assessments. In addition candidates undertook a media response exercise.
- 4.6 The assessments were followed by formal interviews on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 by the Appointment Committee, advised by Solace and the Director, People Performance & Change. Candidates also participated in stakeholder interviews with each political group. Thereafter, the Committee met to

consider the candidates and the information from the tests and the interviews, agreeing unanimously to the appointment of David Robertson to the post of Chief Executive, commencing with immediate effect.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial**

There are financial implications in respect of advertising costs, the costs of external recruitment advisors and testing costs. These costs have been met by existing budget resource.

### **5.2 Risk and Mitigations**

There are risks that the overall leadership and corporate direction of the Council may not be effective if the role of Chief Executive is vacant. This risk has been mitigated effectively over the last 6 months through a temporary acting appointment and has now been addressed on a permanent basis.

### **5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment**

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposals in this report.

### **5.4 Sustainable Development Goals**

There are economic and social benefits in having a Chief Executive in post, and in having robust interim arrangements. There are no environmental impacts.

### **5.5 Climate Change**

The appointment of a new Chief Executive and having in place robust interim arrangements ensures there is appropriate leadership to continue to drive the Council's Climate Change commitments.

### **5.6 Rural Proofing**

N/A.

### **5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement**

It is anticipated that the proposals in this report will have a minimal impact on data subjects and the Data Protection Officer has confirmed that a Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required.

### **5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Interim Chief Officer Corporate Governance (and Monitoring Officer), Acting Chief Financial Officer, Chief Officer Audit & Risk, and Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received incorporated into this report. Members of the Corporate Management Team have been updated on the contents of the report.

## Approved by

**Name** Clair Hepburn

**Job Title** Director People Performance & Change

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Clair Hepburn	Service Director People Performance and Change

**Background Papers:**

**Previous Minute Reference:** Scottish Borders Council, 12 July 2022

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Iain Davidson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at: Clair Hepburn, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters,  
Newtown St.Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA. E-mail: chepburn@scotborders.gov.uk  
Tel: 01835 825221