

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CHIEF OFFICER SUB COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the virtual meeting of the Sub-Committee held on the 14th January 2021 at 12.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Blackwell, Botten, Elias, Milton and Sayer

Annette Capper (Interim Executive Head of Corporate Resources)
Lidia Harrison (Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer)
Vince Sharp (Democratic Services)
Heather Wills (Improvement Adviser)

ALSO PRESENT: Steve Guest (SOLACE)
Terry McDougall (SOLACE)
Robert Tinlin (LGA / technical adviser to the Council)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Sayer was elected Chair for the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

These were approved as a correct record.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT UPDATE

At its previous meeting, the Sub-Committee had agreed that Jackie King remain in post as Acting Chief Executive for a period of up to six months (i.e. ending 13th May 2021) pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive. It had also been agreed that the Executive Head of Corporate Resources (EHCR) post be back-filled during the transition period. Subsequently:

- Annette Capper had been appointed as an interim EHCR until the 31st March 2021; and
- members of the Sub-Committee had been meeting on an informal basis to discuss the development of a recruitment brief and to receive advice from SOLACE, the agency procured by the Council to facilitate the recruitment.

The Sub-Committee considered a report which referenced recent advice from SOLACE in light of the current national lockdown (imposed by the Government to help suppress the spread of Covid-19) and its potential impact on the recruitment process. The report suggested that the recruitment process be paused and recommence either:

- immediately following the lifting of national lockdown measures if local elections are deferred to 2022 or late in 2021; or

- immediately following the lifting of national lockdown measures and local elections if local elections take place in May 2021 or soon afterwards.

Upon discussing the relative merits of the matter and having received advice from SOLACE and Rob Tinlin, the Council's technical adviser for the recruitment process, the Sub-Committee concluded that, on balance, it would be in the Council's best interests to commence the recruitment process and for an advertisement to appear in the following week's Municipal Journal. Although the risks were understood, Members considered that the key objective was to achieve stability for the Council and that the field of potential candidates should be tested forthwith.

The SOLACE representatives explained the nature of the search process following the advertisement. They also outlined the implications of having to repeat the exercise if, for whatever reason, a suitable candidate(s) did not materialise.

Robert Tinlin advised that, while normal council business could be transacted during the pre-election period, it was advisable for councils to avoid, if at all possible, holding sensitive meetings at that time. A special Full Council meeting to agree the appointment of a new Chief Executive, as required by law could therefore be scheduled prior to the pre-election period (assuming the May 2021 elections went ahead as scheduled).

Annette Capper left the meeting and the terms of her appointment as Interim EHCR were also discussed.

RESOLVED – that:

- A. the Council proceed forthwith with the process for recruiting a new Chief Executive; and
- B. Annette Capper's appointment as Interim Executive Head of Corporate Resources be extended, if necessary, for up to a further two months until the 31st May 2021.

Rising 1.09 pm