

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOW AUTHORITY MEETING

18th August 2020

Report Title	Appointment of the Chief Executive
Report Author	Marie Devlin-Hogg – Unitary HR Enabler (on behalf of the Senior Appointments Committee)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend to the Shadow Authority the appointment of the new permanent Chief Executive for the West Northamptonshire Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Anna Earnshaw be confirmed as Chief Executive designate for the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority from 1 October 2020 and that she be confirmed as the new permanent Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer for the West Northamptonshire Council from 1 April 2021.
- 2.2 A salary of £170,000 (within the advertised salary grade £170,000 - £180,000) to be effective from 1 October 2020.

3. Recruitment & Selection

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 requires the Shadow Authority for West Northamptonshire to appoint a permanent Chief Executive by 31 December 2020; prior to the formation of the new authority on 1 April 2021.
- 3.1.2 A national recruitment campaign was launched in late May 2020 for the permanent Chief Executive role, together with a number of other statutory roles; including Director of Finance (Section 151), Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) and a shared Director Children's Services (DCS) to sit across both unitary authorities.

- 3.1.3 In July 2020, the Senior Appointments Task and Finish Group and Senior Appointments Committee developed the Chief Executive role profile and person specification for this recruitment. They also shaped a robust, holistic selection and interview process and agreed the Members who would undertake the appointment panel.
- 3.1.4 Penna are engaged as our Executive Search Partner and have supported the interview panel in the search for candidates; in addition to the longlisting and shortlisting process; which involved a professional technical adviser/assessor.
- 3.1.5 The Panel received a total of 25 applications from this campaign at the end of June and the longlisted 10 candidates on 13 July.

A shortlist of 5 candidates was then agreed by the panel, following the technical assessment stage. Assessment and interviews took place over a two-day period; with day one (3 August) involving the main member appointment panel and also member, partner and employee stakeholder panels. 3 candidates were then selected by the main appointment panel to take part in the final interview by the main appointment panel on 4 August.

- 3.1.6 The appointment panel received a briefing and training on recruitment and selection prior to the interviews, as agreed by the Joint Committee in January.
- 3.1.7 The final Interview for the Chief Executive was undertaken on Tuesday 4 August 2020. The main appointment panel (senior appointment sub committee) comprised:

Councillor Ian McCord – Chair of the Senior Appointments Panel, Leader of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority and Leader of South Northants Council.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn - Deputy Leader of the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority and Leader of Northampton Borough Council.

Councillor Danielle Stone - West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority Opposition Leader (Labour) and Leader of the Labour Group at Northampton Borough Council.

Councillor Richard Auger - Leader of Daventry District Council.

Councillor Matt Golby - Leader of Northamptonshire County Council.

Councillor Chris Lofts of the Liberal Democrat Group and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group at South Northamptonshire Council.

- 3.1.8 The conclusion of the appointment panel is to recommend the appointment of Anna Earnshaw as West Northamptonshire's new Chief Executive and designated Head of Paid Service. Anna is currently the Director of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Executive with Northamptonshire County Council and has a successful career in leadership, business change, transformation and social care; both in the public and private sector.
- 3.1.9 If agreed by the Shadow Authority, it is proposed that this appointment commences on the 1 October 2020. The role was advertised at a salary between £170 - £180k, based on benchmarking of similar sized councils. The salary offer will be made at the bottom of the salary range.

3.2 Issues and Choices

- 3.2.1 The assessment process on 3 August was part of a preferred approach by the Senior Appointment Task and Finish group to engage wider stakeholders to ensure a more holistic and informed recruitment process.
- 3.2.2 The panels assessed each candidate in a structured interview process against the requirements detailed in the person specification. Member, Partner and Employee stakeholder panels also fed into the process.
- 3.2.3 In recognition of the current Covid crisis all the interviews and stakeholder engagement sessions were conducted virtually and successfully using Zoom.
- 3.2.4 In accordance with the provisions of the Shadow Authority's Constitution, this recommendation has been sent in confidence to the members of the Shadow Executive in order to establish if any member of the Shadow Executive has any objection to the proposed appointment. No objections have been raised to this recommendation.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The appointment of a Statutory Head of Paid Service by 31 December 2020 is a requirement that is laid down in the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 The appointment of Statutory Officers will enable a safe and legal transition from the shadow authority to the Unitary Council in 2021.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The appointments to the statutory officer designations ensures compliance with the Structural Change Order.

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 The appointment process followed a fair and transparent process. Eligible candidates were invited to apply to a national and open recruitment campaign.

