

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT AND REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE JOINT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

8TH JANUARY 2025, AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Chairman), Baker, M. Dormer, W. Hartnett, S. Harvey, R. J. Hunter, P. M. McDonald, J. Spilsbury and P. J. Whittaker (from Minute Item No. 8)

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs B. Talbot and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

5 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor C. Hotham.

Members were advised that Councillor P. Whittaker would be arriving late to the meeting.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

7 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Joint Appointments Committee meeting held on 13th November 2024 were submitted.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Joint Appointments Committee meeting held on 13th November 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

8 **NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITIONS OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager presented a report detailing the background to nominations for the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer respectively.

The Committee was advised that there had been a rigorous recruitment process undertaken in 2024 to recruit to both the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service as well as the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer. The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee had interviewed various candidates, following a detailed shortlisting process for both roles. The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee had received expert advice and support from representatives of external recruitment consultants, GatenbySanderson as well as the

current Chief Executive and the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager.

Based on the outcomes of the recruitment process, the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee had agreed the following nominations:

- Mr John Leach to the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- Mr Robert Watson to the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

Subject to the endorsement of the Joint Appointments Committee, both nominations would need to be referred for approval at meetings of the respective authorities' full Council. There was a legal requirement to check, prior to the Council meetings, that no members of Bromsgrove Cabinet or Redditch Executive Committee objected to the nominations. Members were advised that meetings of Council were due to take place on 22nd January 2025 in Bromsgrove and on 27th January 2025 in Redditch. Should both Councils approve the nominations, there would remain a requirement for satisfactory reference checks and medical assessments and both candidates would need to complete notice periods with their existing employers prior to commencing employment with the Councils.

Following the presentation of the report, Members questioned the outcomes of the reference check process and whether Councillors would be provided with copies of these. Officers clarified that the reference check process could not commence until after the Council meetings had formally ratified the nominations.

Reference was also made to the section of the report that referred to equalities and diversity implications. A request was received from Members for a breakdown of the ethnic diversity and gender of applicants for the positions. In response to this query, Officers provided the following data:

- Gender
 - Male – 17
 - Female – 3
 - No Answer – 1
- Age Range
 - 35-44 – 3
 - 45-54 – 7
 - 55-64 – 10
 - No Answer – 1
- Ethnic Origin
 - Pakistani – 1
 - White British – 17
 - No Answer – 1
 - Any Other Asian Background – 1
 - Any Other White Background – 1

- Disability
 - No – 19
 - No Answer/Prefer Not To Say – 2
- Sexual Orientation
 - LGBTQ+ - 2
 - Heterosexual – 17
 - No Answer – 1
 - Prefer Not To Say – 1

In response to questions regarding the gender breakdown of shortlisted candidates for the positions, Officers confirmed that they had all been male. However, the Committee was asked to note that two female candidates had been shortlisted but had chosen, for personal reasons, not to go forward with their applications.

Consideration was subsequently given to the reasons why the two candidates who had been nominated for these positions had been favoured by the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee. The Members of the Sub-Committee explained that there had been a very rigorous recruitment process, which had included presentations from the candidates relating to their visions for the Councils over the following year. All of the members of the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee had had an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates which had informed their conclusions. The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee had based their nominations on consideration of all of the information and advice that had been received during the course of the recruitment process and Members were asked to note that there had been unanimous support for both nominations.

Questions were raised with respect to the reasons why both candidates had applied for the positions. Clarification was provided that in both cases, the candidates were already in senior positions with their current employers. However, both candidates viewed these positions as opportunities for career advancement; Mr Leach would be promoted from a Deputy Chief Executive to a Chief Executive's position, whilst Mr Watson would be taking on a role in a shared service environment. They were both enthusiastic about the future potential for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils and had encouraging ideas about the opportunities that devolution could provide.

In concluding their discussions on this matter, Members took the opportunity to thank the current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for her hard work as Chief Executive over the preceding 18 months as well as her lengthy career in a senior position at both Councils.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor M. Dormer and seconded by Councillor P. McDonald.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) To note that the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee has completed a rigorous selection process to recruit a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and a new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.**
- 2) The appointment of John Leach as the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. The commencement date will be as soon as possible, subject to notice period.**
- 3) The appointment of Robert Watson as Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer. The commencement date will be as soon as possible, subject to notice period.**
- 4) To note that the salary agreed for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is within the range approved by Redditch Borough Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**
- 5) To note that the salary agreed for the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is within the range approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**

The meeting closed at 5.49 p.m.

Chairman