

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Urgent Business Committee
DATE	27 March 2014
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Post of Chief Executive – Recruitment and Selection Process
REPORT NUMBER:	OCE/14/012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to establish an Appointment Panel to recruit to the post of Chief Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee agrees –

- (1) to establish an Appointment Panel comprising 9 members in total (3 Labour, 3 SNP, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Conservative and 1 member of the Independent Alliance Group) to appoint to the post of Chief Executive, and that the Panel appoint a Convener from within its membership;
- (2) to delegate powers to the Appointment Panel to agree all matters relating to the recruitment process, including job description and person specification, salary and timeline;
- (3) to delegate powers to the Appointment Panel to agree any interim acting arrangements to cover the role of Chief Executive should the vacancy not be filled for a period of time; and
- (4) that external recruitment consultants be appointed for the purposes of supporting the recruitment to the post and in this regard to invoke Standing Order 1(6)(a) of the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Procurement to allow a contract to be entered into with the recruitment consultants Aspen to support the recruitment process for this post, without the need to seek four quotes in accordance with Standing Order 6 or to undertake a competitive tendering exercise in accordance with Standing Order 5.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recruitment and selection costs will be provided to the first meeting of the Appointment Panel. At this stage it is considered that recruitment and selection costs can be met from the budget established for Chief Officer recruitment and selection.

It is estimated full costs for the recruitment process including costs of appointing Aspen as external recruitment consultants, recruitment advertising costs, costs

of running the assessment centre and purchase and administration of psychometric tests, candidate expenses etc. will be in the region of £50,000. Additional monies may be required to be identified if we are unsuccessful in appointing on the first attempt and there is a need to readvertise the vacancy.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

In 2009 the Council undertook a procurement exercise and a framework agreement for the provision of recruitment services was put in place. A Call-Off Contract for the appointment of up to 21 Heads of Service was awarded to Munros Consulting now called Aspen People. However, this recruitment consultants framework expired in October 2012 and to date has not been retendered and therefore cannot be used to obtain the required external recruitment services.

It is now requested that Standing Order 1(6)(a) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and Procurement be invoked to allow a new contract to be entered into with Aspen People without the need to seek four quotes in accordance with Standing Order 6 or to undertake a competitive tendering exercise in accordance with Standing Order 5. It is estimated that the value of the Aspen People contract will be £18,000. Ordinarily, where the Council wants to put in place any contract for services with a value below £60,000, the Standing Orders require four written quotes to be sought. Where the estimated value of the contract is above £60,000, a competitive tendering exercise must be undertaken. In assessing the estimated value of a contract, the Council must have regard to the aggregation rules which require expenditure on a similar purpose to be rolled up or aggregated. Aspen People have been contracted to support other recruitment exercises over the last year and there is the prospect that the aggregated fees will exceed the £60,000 threshold. In these circumstances the Council would ordinarily undertake a procurement in accordance with Standing Order 5. However, if the Council is satisfied that there are special circumstances to exempt any Contract from these requirements, Standing Order 1(6)(a) can be invoked.

It is felt that the current situation is justified by special circumstances as there is a time pressure to commence the recruitment process as soon as possible. Seeking quotes or undertaking a competitive procurement would unduly delay this process. It should also be noted that Officers have already commenced work with the Central Procurement Unit with a view to retendering recruitment support services for any future recruitment exercises

In view of the fact the current Chief Executive has tendered her resignation and will be leaving employment with the Council at the end of June, there may be a need to put interim, acting arrangements in place. It is requested that if there is a need to do so, the required authority be delegated to the Appointment Panel.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 **Background** - Standing Order 47(2) states that Chief Executive of the Council shall be appointed by an Appointment Panel of such composition as the Council may determine, but reflecting the political balance of the Council and chaired by the Convener of the Committee with the HR

function (the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee), or such other member as may be determined.

- 5.2 **Composition** – On this basis, it is proposed that the Appointment Panel composition should be 3 Labour, 3 SNP, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Conservative and 1 member of the Independent Alliance Group. Names should be notified to Democratic Services as soon as possible as it proposed that the first meeting of the Panel be held next week.
- 5.3 **Delegation of powers to Panel** – In the interests of accelerating the recruitment process, it is suggested that powers be delegated to the Appointment Panel on all matters relating to the recruitment process. This will include the job description and person specification for the post, salary for the post, the timeline for the process, and the appointment of advisers (including external support). The Appointment Panel will be advised by Valerie Watts during the recruitment process. The Panel will also be required to make decisions as to the use of stakeholder assessment centres/competence testing for candidates, the venue to be used for candidate interviews, and the arrangements for holding candidate lunches, as well as all remaining aspects of the recruitment process.
- 5.4 **Timeline** – For the information of members, the timeline below is indicative, although this will be confirmed or adjusted by the Panel at its first meeting:-

1 April	Initial meeting of Appointment Panel meets to agree job description, person specification, salary and arrangements for recruitment process.
4 to 21 April	Post advertised
28 April	Appointment Panel meets to agree a shortlist of candidates
8 May	Assessment Centre
9 May	Appointment Panel meets to interview candidates

6. IMPACT

Recruitment to this post will impact across the Council's entire business and service planning landscape and given the profile and importance of the post, the report is likely to be of public interest both within and outwith the city.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a paid head of service (Chief Executive) and it is advisable that the recruitment process be completed as soon as possible to minimise acting up arrangements.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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