

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Strategic Transformation Committee
DATE	4 October 2017
REPORT TITLE	Director Recruitment and Selection Process
LEAD OFFICER	Angela Scott
REPORT AUTHOR	Morven Spalding, Interim Head of HR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

To outline the process for the recruitment of four Director roles to Aberdeen City Council per Full Council approval on 23rd August 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

To note the report.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

There is a real shift in public services at the moment to ensuring the senior talent is 'fit for purpose' for the future. Forward thinking councils are looking at the positioning of their ambitions and strategies and then aligning the skills and expertise of their senior team to manage and deliver these. Forming the right relationships between the top team players will be critical and building a strong collegiate team that works well with Elected Members, public and private partners, the workforce and local communities will be key.

The appointment of the four Directors will be critical in forming the new Corporate Management Team and this is a really exciting opportunity for the Council to fully engage in the campaign to do this. It is recognised that the campaign will be formed of an attraction strategy which will consist of executive search, national and local advertising.

It will be important to promote the narrative for the City and the Council so that there is a clear proposition to the market place about what Aberdeen and these roles have to offer. It will be important to work closely with the marketing team to select the right images and get the energy right in the words used.

Procuring these Services from a recruitment provider who has the right skills and resources to manage a multiple job campaign will be important and just as important will be their ability to understand Aberdeen as a city and Council. It will also be important to utilise the 'good practice' experience that the company has used to ensure strong senior appointments are made.

Previous attempts to recruit have met some challenges and we will need to manage the risks by regular updates – not getting too focused on 'process' but ensuring that we run a campaign that will deliver against the requirements. Our recruitment provider will be asked to help manage expectations and risks by regular updates.

Understanding the sectorial skills and expertise for the roles will help set the search geography for the roles too; making the right decisions around which selection and assessment techniques to be used will be important too. Ensuring that the selection process is modern and exciting will be important to engage candidates from across the sectors.

Aligning the campaign to the Council's governance approach will be important engaging Elected members and the Chief Executive at the key times and ensuring strong interested candidates have access to the Chief Executive through the attraction campaign will help the two way approach to engage the good ones into applying.

Sitting alongside the search and attraction campaign will be an advertising microsite which carries key information about the Council and the transformation journey we are on, Aberdeen as a place to live and work and the roles to enable candidates to be informed.

A key part of the selection process is for Elected Members to be engaged and involved in the assessment centre, as well as having a leading role at the Appointments Panel interview. This will give Members a valuable opportunity to observe candidates in a range of settings providing a comprehensive view of candidates' competence and behaviours.

There is a need to recruit to these posts quickly and successfully at the first attempt in order to remove the current dependency on interim resource and to ensure traction on the Transformation Portfolio which is critical to enable the Council to set and deliver a balanced budget for 2018/19.

Procurement of Executive Recruitment Consultancy Services

Market research was undertaken in conjunction with the Commercial & Procurement Service and the executive recruitment consultancy services have been procured by compliantly calling off from the ESPO Framework 3S Strategic HR Services and awarding to one of the providers on that Framework, Penna plc., one of the providers on that Framework. The Framework states that contracting authorities can undertake a mini-competition of the suppliers who are on it or we can make a direct award to one of the suppliers without re-opening competition. The Guidance on the Framework states that the latter can be done: - "If you decide that a single supplier can meet your requirements based on the pricing and/or other

information provided in the User Guide simply place an order with that supplier.”

Recruitment and Selection Process

Longlisting

An initial screening of all candidates will be carried out by the Chief Executive, Interim Head of HR and the Recruitment Provider, taking applications to a maximum of 6 per role.

First Screening Interview

Following longlisting, it is proposed that the long-listed candidates will undertake a first screening interview by the Chief Executive, the Interim Head of HR and the Recruitment Provider to determine behaviours and competence of the individual.

Outcomes from these interviews will be discussed with the Chief Executive and the Interim Head of HR to determine which candidates will be shortlisted and progress to the next stage – Assessment Centre.

Psychometric Assessment

All shortlisted candidates will be expected to complete a Thomas International Personal Profile Analysis and a High Potential Trait Leadership psychometric which will be undertaken prior to the assessment centre.

Assessment Centre

The Assessment Centre will comprise a number of sessions:

- An interview with Group Leaders and Chief Executive
- Behaviourally-based scenarios of complex challenges and decision making which are all interlinked through the Target Operating Model dependencies, using peer group and potential direct reports; these will highlight different leadership styles that can be selected to offer the greatest likelihood of success within the Target Operating Model; This will include Elected Members and Trade Union colleagues
- Stakeholder Panels and Staff Engagement Panels to include Elected Members and Trade Union Colleagues

The Assessment Centre process proposed above will include involvement from our Recruitment Provider, ALEOs and our partners;

It is intended that candidates will be assessed in mixed groups containing applicants for each post at any one time; this would focus directly on the team element and would allow assessors to observe candidates “in role” alongside their psychometric profile; this process would involve Elected Members.

Assessment Centre Outcomes

At the end of the assessment centre, feedback from each session will be collated and rankings / scores for each activity will then be collated and discussed with a core group of interested parties including Elected Members, Trade Union colleagues Officers including the Chief Executive and the Council's Recruitment Provider. This meeting will confirm candidates to be put forward to the final stage Appointment Panel Interview.

Final Assessment Stage

Following, the outcomes of the assessment centre, it is proposed, if logistically possible, to include a final assessment stage for Director roles, where the four final preferred candidates are involved in an observed group session with a set topic focusing on how they would work together and deliver as a team. This part of the process is yet to be determined.

Appointments Panel Interviews and Offer of Appointments

The final stage of the selection process will be a Selection Panel interview with the Appointments Panel who will ask a number of set questions to each candidate. Decisions will be made on the basis of interview performance together with outcomes of the assessment centre.

Following the Appointment Panel Interviews and outcomes, preferred candidates will be notified. Following completion of pre-employment checks, contracts of employment will be issued.

Indicative Timeline for Selection Process

A summary of the key stages is detailed below. For full details of the activity timetable, please see Appendix 1 (attached).

Commence contract with Recruitment provider, logistics and start of search	18 September 2017
Advertising / Executive Search commences	2 October 2017
Closing Date for all 4 roles	Friday 3 November 2017
Longlisting	w/c 6 November 2017
First Screening Interviews with Chief Executive, Head of HR and Recruitment Partner	w/c 6 / 13 November 2017
Assessment Centre and outcomes / Member Appointment Panel *	w/c 27 November 2017 and 4 December 2017
Candidates Start (assuming maximum 3 month notice)	March / April 2018

* Subject to Elected Members' diary commitments

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost to facilitate the recruitment was detailed in the report to Full Council on 23rd August 2017 at a cost of up to £80,000 to be met from existing budgets. A more detailed breakdown of the financial implications associated with the recruitment and selection process of the 4 Director roles are as follows:

- Recruitment provider –estimated £70,000. Funded from existing budgets.
- Psychometric testing - £25 per test; estimated total cost £700.
- Costs will be funded from existing funds. Psychometric testing costs will be met from the Corporate Training Budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The recruitment services have been procured by compliantly calling off from the ESPO Framework 3S Strategic HR Services and awarding to one of the providers on that Framework.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risk attached to this report mainly lies with the understanding that our recruitment provider can deliver on presenting the Council with a suitable candidate base for consideration. If the Council is unable to appoint to all four directors, there is a risk in progressing the development and execution of the Target Operating Model.

To mitigate these risks, by implementing a robust selection process including Members at all key stages, rather than only at Appointments Panel stage, as in previous Chief Officer recruitment, will ensure Members and Officers have a well balanced view of each candidate prior to the final interview stage. In addition, alternative approaches will be explored to maintain governance and operations.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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