South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Cyd-bwyllgor corfforaethol De-Dwyrain Cymru

Report for:	ACTION
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO

For Consideration By	Corporate Joint Committee
Report Title	Ratification of Appointment of Senior Executive Posts
Report of	Kellie Beirne, Chief Executive Officer
Contact Details	Kellie.beirne@cardiffcapitalregion.gov.uk
Date to be Considered	7 May 2024
Implementation Date	With immediate effect
Affected Council Areas	All
Keywords / Index	Senior Executive Team

Report Summary

1. The report seeks the Southeast Wales Corporate Joint Committee's ratification of the appointment of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Regional Growth and the Strategic Director Resources, following recommendation made by the Appointments Panel on 12 April 2024.

Recommendations

2. **Corporate Joint Committee is asked to:**

2.1. Endorse the recommendation of the Appointments Panel, to appoint Rhys Thomas to the position of Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Regional Growth and Liam Hull, to that of Strategic Director, Resources;

2.2. Appoint Liam Hull as the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee's Chief Finance Officer pursuant to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, with effect from the date upon which he takes up the appointment as Director of Resources; and

2.3. Delete the post of Chief Operating Officer from the Corporate Joint Committee's existing establishment.

Reasons for Recommendations and Options Considered

Background

3. The meeting of the Southeast Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 4 December 2023, agreed the Executive Team structure proposed by the Chief Executive. This report set out a comprehensive rationale, based on the growth of investment prospects and new programmes; and the new policy and statutory duties conferred by CJC Regulations, including the appointment of statutory officers. The structure set out the following:

- Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director Regional Growth – lead on City Deal, Investment Zone, development and delivery of a second regional growth fund, Investment Board, Net Zero, Group Structure development and oversight of additional investment and infrastructure programmes.
- Strategic Director, Resources – statutory s151 role, oversight of all accounting and medium-term financial planning, ICT, Governance and Audit Sub-Committee, HR, service level agreements, business management, assets and emergency planning.
- Strategic Director, Legal and Governance – statutory Monitoring Officer function, lead on all legal and contractual advice, group governance reporting, Standards Committee, Information Management, Procurement and Democratic Services.
- Strategic Director, Policy, Impact and Partnerships – lead on production and deployment of new statutory plans such as the Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan, corporate business plans, Gateway Review, impact delivery and partnership network including the Regional Growth Board and statutory sub-committees for transport and planning.

3.1 Following the process of external advert and shortlisting by the Appointment's Panel, a comprehensive Assessment Centre was held, supported by independent facilitators and RCT Council, in its capacity as Human Resources service provider to the CJC. The process for both posts included several exercises testing competency, behaviours and aptitudes and in addition to the CJC CEO and Head of HR, the assessment panel was bolstered by participation of Chief Executives and members of the Investment and Regional Growth Boards.

3.2 Candidates were invited to final interview with the Appointment's Panel on Friday 12 April 2024. Appointment's Panel recommended the appointment of Rhys Thomas to the post of Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director Regional Growth and Liam Hull, to the post of Strategic Director, Resources.

Reasons for Report

3.3 The Southeast Wales Corporate Joint Committee is now asked to endorse the recommendations of the Appointments Panel and formally appoint Rhys Thomas in the role as Deputy Chief Executive/ Strategic Director Regional Growth and Liam Hull as Corporate Director, Resources, in accordance with the CJC's Constitution. Commencement of duties will begin with immediate

effect for the Deputy Chief Executive and following a notice period for the Strategic Director, Resources.

3.4 It should be further noted that the remaining two positions of Strategic Director, Legal and Governance, and Strategic Director, Policy, Impact and Partnerships, are currently out to external advert. The process outlined above will be adopted in accordance with the CJC's Constitution for these appointments.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

4. Both the CJC's Annual Business Plan and Annual Budget for 2024/25, which were set and agreed by CJC in January 2024, established the clear objective to recruit a Senior Executive Team in 2024/25, to fill long-term leadership gaps and provide for the resources required for effective leadership. Whilst also a legal requirement of CJC Regulations to recruit statutory officers, the independent work commissioned on a Target Operating Model approved by CJC in September 2023, provided the backdrop and business case for the structure, which was further considered and approved by CJC in December 2023.

Comments of the Section 151 Officer

5. The post of Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director Resources have been fully costed and included in the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee's approved 2024/25 Revenue Budget. The budget report set out in detail the proposed Senior Executive Team arrangements and costs, along with details (and costs) of the interim arrangements that would operate until the postholders commenced their duties.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

6. In accordance with Part 2 of the Schedule to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021, the CJC must make such arrangements for staffing as are necessary for the proper discharge of its functions. Where the CJC appoints staff, they are to be appointed on terms and conditions (including as to remuneration) substantially similar to those of officers within a constituent council undertaking responsibilities which the CJC considers to be reasonably comparable.

7. Regulation 3 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021, requires the Chief Executive of the CJC to keep under review and, where she considers appropriate to do so, make a report to the CJC setting out her proposals in respect of the CJC's staffing arrangements, and the CJC must provide its Chief Executive with such staff as are, in the Chief Executive's opinion, sufficient to allow the Chief Executive to carry out her duties. The Chief Executive reported her proposals for the appointment of a Senior Executive Team, including the appointment of a Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources (s.151 Officer) to a meeting of the Committee on 4 December 2023, and those recommendations were approved.

8. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Regulation 5 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021) places a duty on the CJC to appoint an officer with responsibility for financial administration. The reporting functions of the Chief Finance Officer (s.151 Officer) are set out in sections 114 and 115 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

9. An Interim s.151 Officer and Interim Deputy s.151 Officer were appointed at a meeting of the CJC on 29 January 2024, and those officers currently remain in post. This report now recommends the appointment of a permanent s.151 Officer with effect from a start date to be agreed (following the appointee's notice period in this current employment).

10. At a meeting of the CJC on 29 January 2024, the Committee approved arrangements for the establishment of an Appointments Panel to consider any applications for appointment to posts in the CJC's Senior Executive Team, shortlist and interview candidates, and make recommendations to the Corporate Joint Committee. The Appointments Panel duly met and this report contains their recommendations.

11. Pursuant to section 8 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended by Regulation 11 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021), the CJC has adopted standing orders with respect to staff, which were adopted as part of the CJC's Constitution at a meeting of the Committee on 18 March 2024. The appointment of Chief Officers, including the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Resources, is a matter reserved to the Corporate Joint Committee.

12. Both of the Chief Officer posts subject of this report are politically restricted posts pursuant to section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended by Regulation 10 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021).

Staffing Implications

13. Requirement to have the Deputy Chief Executive post ratified so the appointee Rhys Thomas can support the Chief Executive with immediate effect – critical to managing ongoing organisational priorities, and start agreeing critical resourcing requirements,

14. SD Resourcing (s151 Officer) appointee Liam Hull required to fill the s151 statutory role currently being fulfilled by an interim Chris Bradshaw and Interim Deputy s151 Hrjinder Singh. Appointee will be instrumental in working with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to agree and formalise organisational structure.

Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

15. There are no implications directly associated with this report, save to say, the process of recruitment was undertaken in accordance with HR policy and procedure and with the aim of attracting a diverse pool of eligible candidates.

Sustainability and Climate Considerations

16. There are no implications directly associated with this report. However, ensuring the right team is in place to lead the CJC operations and talent on and off-payroll is about ensuring the capability and capacity exists to deliver on significant objectives, such as the CCR's adopted Energy Plan.

Risk Management

17. The appointment of an Executive Team is critical to managing risks around:

- Existing gaps in leadership capacity and resources and ensuring the officer team is suitably skilled to lead the on and off-payroll 'workforce' and establish critical fitness for the future.
- The requirement in the CJC Regulations for appointment of statutory officers.
- The requirements to meet the contractual obligations of the City Deal and Investment Zone programmes.
- The requirements to meet the statutory requirements of CJC Regulations in respect of economic wellbeing, strategic planning and regional transport and a range of legal corporate duties.

Consultation

18. A wide range of internal and external senior stakeholders have been involved in this process which has been overseen by the Appointments Panel.

Welsh Language Implications

19. Due regard has been had to Welsh language Implications in the conducting the full recruitment process.

Well-being of Future Generations

20. In developing the Recommendations of this report, regard has been had to the well-being duty arising under the to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

Background Papers

Report to CJC 4 December 2023 – Recruitment of SEWCJC Executive Team.

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7 May 2024

Appendices

None