

Appointment of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service

Date: 31 October 2024

Report of: Interim Assistant Chief Executive – People, Digital & Change

Report to: Council

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The purpose of the report is to invite Council to approve the recommendation of the Employment Committee to appoint Ed Whiting to the role of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.

It is expected that Ed Whiting will commence in role on 6 January 2025. The current interim arrangements will remain in place until then.

Recommendations

- a) To note the contents of this report.
- b) To seek Council approval to the recommendation of the Employment Committee of 24 October 2024 to appoint Ed Whiting to the post of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.

What is this report about?

- 1 The purpose of the report is to seek Council approval to the recommendation of the Employment Committee of 24 October 2024 to appoint Ed Whiting to the post of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.

Background

- 2 Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Part 4(l) of the Constitution sets out the requirements for the recruitment and appointment of the Council's Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service. This process commenced following Tom Riordan's announcement in May of his intention to leave later in the year. To ensure compliance with the Constitution and leadership continuity, Council approved interim Chief Executive arrangements at its meeting of 11 September 2024.
- 3 The appointment of a Chief Executive is a Council (non-executive) Function. Part 3 Section 2A of the Constitution delegates the responsibility for making recommendations regarding the appointment of the Chief Executive to the Employment Committee for which Terms of Reference are set out in Part 3, Section 2B(g).
- 4 The Employment Committee comprised of Cllr James Lewis (Chair), Cllr Debra Coupar, Cllr Jonathan Pryor and Cllr Alan Lamb.
- 5 Under the direction of the Employment Committee, the Chief Executive recruitment and selection process involved:
 - Deployment of a specialist search consultant (Penna Plc) to engage with potential candidates at an international, national and regional level and from across multiple sectors.
 - National hard copy and online advertisement with a supporting recruitment microsite.
 - Longlisting Assessment based on covering letter, application and CV.
 - Shortlisting Assessment based on Technical Interviews involving a peer Chief Executive, and video presentations.
 - Five separate Stakeholder Panels. The Panels: Children & Young Person Panel, Partner Panel (involving health, third sector, police, business, and higher education leaders), Member Panel (involving cross party members and Scrutiny/Committee Chairs), Senior Officer Panel (Directors and Chief Officers) and a Workforce Panel (involving trade union officers, staff network chairs and the Freedom to Speak up Guardian).
 - Leadership Scenario Assessments & References.
 - Final Interview with the Employment Committee.

In addition to these formal assessments, the shortlisted candidates had the opportunity to meet with members of the Executive Board and attend two Ward Visits (Harehills and Kirkstall) hosted by members and community leaders.

- 6 The Employment Committee carefully considered the feedback received from the assessments and have unanimously recommended the appointment of Ed Whiting to the post of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.
- 7 All members of the Executive Board were subsequently invited to present any material and/or well founded objections to their recommendation within the specified period. No objections were received, and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules have been duly followed.
- 8 A brief summary of Ed Whiting's biography and employment history is included in Appendix 1.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 9 The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service and the most senior employee of the City Council. Their primary function is to provide overall leadership and vision in developing the strategic direction of the senior leadership team and the whole organisation, and deliver the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities in line with the Best City Ambition for Leeds. It is also a constitutional requirement for this post to be filled.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 10 Making this appointment will ensure that there is corporate leadership to deliver the above three pillars of the Best City Ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 11 The proposals contained in this report have been agreed by the Leader. A range of internal and external stakeholders and partners have contributed to the decision-making process as set out in section 5 of this report.

What are the resource implications?

- 12 The Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service is an established post and is within budget provision for 2024/25 therefore no additional costs will be incurred in making this appointment.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 13 There are no identified risks with the proposals set out in this report. There will be appropriate on-boarding and induction arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transition of corporate leadership.

What are the legal implications?

- 14 The approach within this report seeks to ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory requirements as set out in the Constitution.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

15 It is a requirement to ensure that the Council employs a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service at all times and that the mechanism to do so should be pursuant to the Constitution and Officer Employment Procedure Rules. It was therefore essential for the Council to commence a robust and thorough recruitment and selection process upon announcement of Tom Riordan's decision to leave the organisation. The Employment Committee, the HR team and the retained consultants have worked closely throughout this period to ensure that the Council has been in a position to attract and appoint exceptional talent.

How will success be measured?

16 Success will be measured through the smooth and successful transition of officer leadership and the long term service and strategy delivery pursuant to the Best City Ambitions and organisational plan.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

17 The recruitment and selection process has been co-ordinated by the Chief HR Officer and the timeline is as follows:

- Advertisement and Search (from July 2024 onwards, closing date 6 September 2024).
- Longlisting, Technical Interviews and other preliminary assessments (September to October 2024).
- Shortlisting with Employment Committee (7 October 2024).
- Stakeholder Panels and other selection (w/c 14 October 2024).
- Final Interview with Employment Committee (24 October 2024).
- Full Council Approval (13 November 2024).
- On-boarding, transition and induction arrangements (November 2024 onwards).
- New Chief Executive commences (6 January 2025).

Appendix

- Precip of the employment history of Ed Whiting.

Appendix 1

Brief biography and employment history of Ed Whiting OBE

Ed Whiting OBE

Employment History

February 2023 to date

Civil Service: Director of Cities and Local Growth in the Department for Business and Trade and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, based in Leeds, and is currently leading place-based economic growth partnerships with UK Mayors and other local leaders.

September 2016 to November 2022

Wellcome: Director of Strategy, and previously Director of Policy and Chief of Staff. Led the development of their new organisational strategy and global partnerships, and was the executive sponsor for equity, diversity and inclusion.

January 2014 to August 2016

No. 10 Downing Street: Deputy Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister and previously Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Ed has also held senior Civil Service roles in HM Treasury, Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Education & Personal

Ed is very familiar with Leeds having grown up in the city. He attended Christ's College, Cambridge University reading English and History, graduating in 2003.

He now lives in West Yorkshire with his partner David, and they are foster carers to a young baby.