

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Committee for the Appointment of a Chief Executive **Date:** Tuesday, 6 March 2012

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 5.30 - 7.40 pm

Members Present: J M Whitehouse (Chairman), Mrs C Pond (Vice-Chairman), Mrs M McEwen, J Philip and Mrs L Wagland

Other Councillors:

Apologies: Mrs A Grigg and S Murray

Officers Present: P Maginnis (Assistant Director (Human Resources)) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

Also in attendance: J Houlihan

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs A Grigg and S Murray.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made for this meeting.

20. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Committee noted that no substitute members had been notified for this meeting.

21. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted the terms of reference for this Committee as set out on the agenda and that these reflected the decisions made by the Council at its January 2012 meeting regarding three additional items added following adoption of the report of the Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel on Senior Recruitment.

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2012 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. APPOINTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES/RECRUITMENT ADVISERS

The Committee noted that the Chairman of this Committee together with Councillors Philip and Wagland had been authorised at the last meeting to give their views to the

Director of Corporate Support Services on the appointment of a recruitment consultant to assist and advise the Council in the recruitment process.

The Committee noted that a total of six proposals had been received from Human Resources Consultants. Five had been procured through the Essex HR Partnership Framework and one from the East of England Regional Assembly Framework.

The Committee noted that the decision to appoint the company had been confirmed following an informal meeting between a representative of GatenbySanderson, the preferred candidate, and members of the Committee held on 28 February 2012.

The Committee noted that, although the proposal of GatenbySanderson was the second lowest bid in price terms (approximately £2,000 above the lowest), it was considered that this bid was preferable. This view was forwarded to the Director of Corporate Support Services

RESOLVED:

- (1) That proposed appointment of GatenbySanderson at a contract price of £25,100 be supported;
- (2) That reference be made to this appointment in the forthcoming report by the Committee to the next Council meeting on progress with the recruitment.

24. CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT - JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Committee gave consideration to the attributes which the Council should be seeking in the recruitment of a Chief Executive. Key features which were identified were:

- (a) a Chief Executive capable of ensuring that the Council can achieve its major objectives in the short and medium terms;
- (b) a Chief Executive who can articulate a vision for the Council and commit others (both inside and outside the Council) to achieving those objectives;
- (c) a Chief Executive who would be capable of delivering new ways of working where required; and
- (d) a Chief Executive who will be an effective advocate for the Council's interests in a wide range of external forums.

The Committee then proceeded to review the draft Job Description and Person Specification which had been approved at an earlier meeting. Bearing in mind the basic attributes of a Chief Executive which had been agreed earlier during this discussion, minor modifications had been made so as to bring all requirements in line with each other.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the main attributes of the Chief Executive appointment being sought be approved as set out above;
- (2) That the Assistant Director (Human Resources) be authorised to finalise the wording of the Job Description and Person Specification, in

consultation with GatenbySanderson to take account of minor modifications discussed at the meeting so as to align these documents with the attributes of the post and of potential appointees; and

(3) That the final version of the Job Description and Person Specification be circulated to members of the Committee when completed.

25. RECRUITMENT PROCESS - NEXT STEPS

The Committee considered, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Human Resources) and Mr J Houlihan of GatenbySanderson, those decisions now required in order to launch the recruitment process.

(a) Market Conditions and Salary

The Committee considered information assembled by GatenbySanderson on salaries to other Chief Executives including comparisons with other local authorities.

The Committee noted that at an informal meeting on 28 February 2012, possible salary ranges for the proposed job advertisement had been discussed. GatenbySanderson advised on how the salary range might affect the applicants who might come forward and the Committee opted for a salary range which would attract the widest spectrum of applicants, including established figures and aspirant candidates namely, a range of £95-£115,000.

(b) Recruitment Advertising

Gatenby Sanderson submitted a draft recruitment advertisement for consideration by the Committee. The content of the advertisement was agreed subject to any final comments by members of the Committee by e-mail to the Assistant Director (Human Resources).

The Committee noted that GatenbySanderson had negotiated an arrangement with the Municipal Journal for advertising including a web advertising facility designed to ensure the widest possible exposure for the post

(c) Management of Applications/Assessment Centre

The Committee agreed that GatenbySanderson should be delegated the task of "long listing" applicants and should report to an informal meeting of Committee members to ensure that the Committee had an opportunity to comment. GatenbySanderson would submit a detailed assessment proposal/plan to that meeting.

The Committee agreed to involving key partner in the assessment process along with a proposal for technical adviser (a Chief Executive of an equivalent local authority with a good performance record) to provide feedback on applicants.

The Committee accepted the recommendation of GatenbySanderson that the assessment centre for applicants should include a range of measures such as psychometric testing, exercises designed to test the key attributes for the Chief Executive appointment and, if possible, a social event in a more informal context.

The Committee noted that the proposed final selection process would be over two days at an external venue away from the Civic Offices.

(d) Timetable

GatenbySanderson recommended that the Council should not seek to extend the recruitment process over too long a period. The Committee was advised that it would be possible to launch the advertising during in March 2012 with a view to "long listing" taking place after Easter 2012, short listing in early May (after the election period) and a final selection in early June.

The Committee accepted the recommendation of the consultants that the date for an Extraordinary Council meeting to finalise the appointment of should be mid rather than late June to avoid too long a gap between interviews and an appointment which might work to the Council's disadvantage. It was therefore agreed that this should be 18 June 2012 and recommended to the Council.

This date would ensure that there was every opportunity of securing an appointment before 31 August 2012 when the contract of the Acting Chief Executive ended.

(e) Liaison with the Committee during the Recruitment Process

The Committee would receive regular progress reports by GatenbySanderson.

(f) Dealing with Internal Candidates

The Committee discussed with GatenbySanderson arrangements for dealing with any internal applicants for the post of Chief Executive. GatenbySanderson stated that they were familiar with such situations and recommended that it would be advisable that any potential internal candidate receive a letter explaining the proposed recruitment and the the recruitment advertisement.

(g) Training for Members of the Committee

It was agreed that GatenbySanderson should undertake training in assessment and recruitment techniques but that this would be arranged at a later stage in the process, possibly at the "long listing" stage.

(h) Membership of the Committee – Continuity

GatenbySanderson made a strong case for the same members being involved in the recruitment process throughout.

The Committee was conscious that the recruitment period would cover the 3 May 2012 elections and the Annual Council meeting at which Committee memberships were dealt with. In order to recognise that the 7 members of the Committee had been involved in the process from the outset and would be receiving specific training in recruitment and assessment of candidates, it was decided to recommend to the Council that, subject to the results of the District Council elections, the same Chairman, Vice-Chairman and members of the Committee should continue the process after the Annual Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the job advertisement be based on a salary range of £95-£115,000;

- (2) That the draft advert be agreed as amended at the meeting and a second version provided to each member of the Committee for final comments back to the Assistant Director (Human Resources);
- (3) That the timetable for the recruitment process be as follows:
 - (a) opening of recruitment – week commencing 19 March 2012;
 - (b) closing date: mid April 2012;
 - (c) long list – mid April 2012;
 - (d) short listing – early May 2012 (after elections);
 - (e) final selection – early June 2012; and
 - (f) Council approval – 18 June 2012;
- (3) That GatenbySanderson submit detailed proposals for the assessment of candidates to the “long listing” meeting;
- (4) That the proposals of GatenbySanderson for advertising the post by means of a recruitment advert, a micro-site on the web and through the Municipal Journal be approved;
- (5) That Gatenby Sanderson be asked to manage with care any internal applicants for the position of Chief Executive and that the Assistant Director (Human Resources) write to potential applicants with an explanation of the advertising arrangements being put in hand;
- (6) That steps be taken to ensure that Council staff and other members are kept informed of progress;
- (7) That GatenbySanderson keep members of the Committee up-to-date with progress on the recruitment process on a regular basis;
- (8) That GatenbySanderson consider the appropriate time to hold training for members of this Committee in assessment and recruitment procedures; and
- (9) That a report be submitted to the Council as follows:
 - (a) advising the Council on progress being made with the recruitment;
 - (b) recommending that a special Council meeting be held on 18 June 2012 to finalise the appointment of a Chief Executive; and
 - (c) recommending that the Council agrees, in order to provide continuity throughout the recruitment process and subject to the results of the May District Council elections, the present Chairman, Vice-Chairman and members of the Committee be re-appointed at the Annual Council meeting

26. CHIEF EXECUTIVE - SALARY

It was agreed that the Committee had already dealt with this matter under the preceding minute.

27. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee indicated that once final dates on the recruitment programme outlined at the meeting were finalised, copies would be circulated to Committee members and all other councillors for information purposes.

28. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items for consideration which would involve the disclosure of exempt business.

CHAIRMAN