

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Virtual meeting on Friday 22 January 2021 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Sebastian Bowen (chairperson)

Councillors: Graham Andrews, Paul Andrews, Polly Andrews, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Christy Bolderson, Dave Boulter, Tracy Bowes, Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett, Gemma Davies, Barry Durkin, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, John Hardwick, John Harrington, Liz Harvey, Jennie Hewitt, Kath Hey, David Hitchiner, Phillip Howells, Helen I'Anson, Terry James, Peter Jinman, Tony Johnson, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, Trish Marsh, Bob Matthews, Mark Millmore, Jeremy Milln, Felicity Norman, Roger Phillips, Tim Price, Paul Rone, Alan Seldon, Nigel Shaw, Louis Stark, John Stone, David Summers, Elissa Swinglehurst, Paul Symonds, Kevin Tillett, Diana Toynbee, Ange Tyler and Yolande Watson

Officers: Director for children and families, Director for economy and place, Interim Head of Legal Services, Democratic services manager, Director for adults and communities and Solicitor to the council

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kema Guthrie.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Council considered a report by the chairperson of the employment panel concerning the appointment of chief executive. The chairperson of the employment panel introduced the report and proposed the recommendations contained in the report. He explained the credentials of Mr Paul Walker, the proposed chief executive, and the experience that ensured he was a suitable candidate for the post.

The cabinet member economy, environment and skills seconded the recommendations in the report and explained the good record of project delivery that Mr Walker would bring to Herefordshire.

During the debate members raised the principal points below:

- It was queried whether the proposed chief executive would relocate to Herefordshire. *The chairperson of the employment panel explained that this was not known however modern ways of working ensured that remote working could occur effectively.*
- The proposed chief executive's perception of elected members was queried. *The chairperson of the employment panel explained that through the selection process it had been apparent that in previous roles the proposed chief executive had established good dialogue with elected members.*
- A member queried whether the Council needed a chief executive.

- It was commented that not all members had been privy to the detail involved in the selection process.
- The background of the proposed chief executive in education and children's services was welcomed.
- The health checks undertaken in advance of appointment to the post of chief executive were queried. *The chief finance officer explained that all necessary pre-employment checks would be undertaken.*
- It was queried whether the proposed chief executive would be on a period of probation. *The chief finance officer explained that standard employment practices at the Council would apply to the role of chief executive.*

Councillor Carole Gandy moved a motion that the question be now put which was seconded by Councillor Peter Jinman.

Council voted to approve the recommendations in the report as follows: recommendation (a) by a simple majority; recommendation (b) unanimously; and recommendation (c) by a simple majority.

RESOLVED – That:

- (a) Paul Walker is appointed as the council's chief executive and head of paid service.**
- (b) The solicitor to the council is designated to be acting head of paid service from 12 February when the current chief executive leaves the council's employment and until the newly appointed chief executive starts in post.**
- (c) To ensure appropriate and necessary separation of statutory roles, the interim head of legal services is designated to be acting monitoring officer for any period of time when the solicitor to the council is designated as acting head of paid service.**

The meeting ended at 11.05 am

Chairperson