

**Minutes of the meeting of Employment panel held at
Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE
on Monday 9 August 2021 at 2.00 pm**

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner (chairperson)
Councillor Ellie Chowns (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Tony Johnson, Liz Harvey and Terry James

Officers: Assistant director, people and Chief Executive

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

31. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

None.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2021 were approved.

34. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

35. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

36. APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTORS

The Assistant Director, People introduced the item.

The council has a number of senior roles being filled on a temporary or interim basis.

Since starting in post in May, the chief executive has taken the opportunity of having a number of vacancies, to review the senior management structure, and he is currently consulting with management board about a number of changes he is proposing to make.

Consideration has been given to reducing the corporate director roles to two by joining the adults and children portfolios to create a people directorate. This is a model which, given the significant crossover, works well in many organisations. However, given the intensity of the improvement work underway in our children's service, it was determined that now is not the right time to risk diluting that improvement focus

The report therefore sets out proposals to recruit to three posts in the new structure:

Corporate Director of community wellbeing
Corporate Director for children and young people
Corporate Director of Public health

Since publishing the report, a further vacancy has arisen and an amendment to the report was published on Thursday 5th August to include recruitment for the post of:

Corporate director economy and environment.

Which brings us to 4 posts to recruit to.

Shortlisting and interviewing for these posts is reserved to employment panel in the council's constitution which is why this proposal is being discussed at this meeting here today.

One distinction to note between the corporate director posts and the DPH is that the appointment of the director of public health must take place with the regional director for public health England.

Recruiting good candidates to these roles will be challenging. The recruitment market is particularly difficult at the moment and relying on a national advert to attract candidates is not likely to be successful. The report recommends that a specialist agency or agencies are engaged to headhunt a field of candidates.

Recruiting to 4 posts will be an intense piece of work and will make demands on all of the diaries of panel members and others involved in the process. There is an indicative timetable but this may change. The AD, People, commented that she would aim to balance the need to get on and fill this posts at pace without moving so quickly that insufficient time is given to the search. Whichever agency was engaged will have a view of our timetable and at an appropriate time would confirm timescales.

During discussion of the item, the following points were noted:

1. The panel understood and agreed that children's and adults needed to be separate directorates at the moment. It was important that children's kept a focus on improving their service and there was no wish to potentially destabilise the adults and community directorate. However, this may be an opportunity in the future.
2. Ofsted were believed not to be very supportive of combining the roles of director of adult social services and director of children's services.
3. The panel were keen that there was good cross directorate working and that as far as the service user was concerned, it was seamless.
4. Herefordshire is a small authority, which presented opportunities and challenges.
5. The agencies would need to understand what Herefordshire required and noted that there will be a head hunting exercise.
6. Sufficient time needed to be set aside for interviews.
7. Employment Panel would receive details of those candidates who were not being recommended for short listing and the reasons why.
8. If possible, a joint exercise to see how the candidates worked together would be built into the process.
9. There was no role for employment panel with regard to the appointment of the director of transformation. However, the cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning would be involved as would the Leader where possible.
10. With regard to the recruitment of the director of public health, this would be a 2 stage process as the Faculty for Public Health would need to determine if

candidates were competent. This would be a challenging appointment during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that

- a) Recruitment for the Corporate Director Children and Young People, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Corporate Director Economy and Environment and Director of Public Health is initiated in line with the estimated timescales set out in paragraph 12 below; and**
- b) The employment panel endorses the recruitment plan and delegates long listing to the Chief Executive and Assistant Director, People.**

The meeting ended at 2.28 pm

Chairperson