

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held in the Trent Meeting Room - The Guildhall on 6 March 2025 commencing at 4.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Moira Westley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Lynne Thomsett People Services Manager
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

Apologies: Councillor Jeanette McGhee

Membership:

17 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held on 7 January 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

18 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting

19 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

20 MOTION TO VARY THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman proposed that the order of the agenda be varied, taking the exempt reports in the opposite order to the published agenda. The Committee indicated their consent, and, on that basis, it was

RESOLVED that the order of the agenda be varied with agenda item 5(b) be taken prior to agenda item 5(a).

21 UPDATE ON THE RECRUITMENT OF A DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ASSETS

The People Services Manager updated Committee briefly on progress in the recruitment of a Director of Finance and Assets and Section 151 Officer.

Members were advised of the work undertaken by the consultants to-date, the number of candidates approached, those places where the advert had been posted and of the current S151 market and potential barriers to recruitment following feedback from those approached via the consultant.

Having heard of the barriers, direction was sought from the Committee as to whether they wished to extend the deadline for applications. Following brief discussion, noting the consultant's recommendation and the nature of the barriers, the Committee indicated an extension would not overcome two of those matters raised.

At the request of a Member the Chairman outlined why the chosen recruitment agency had been selected.

It was also suggested and accepted that any movement on salary should be considered only once Members had interviewed candidates.

On that basis it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the feedback provided during the recruitment advertising to- date be noted;
- (b) the closing date not be extended; and
- (c) the timetable be noted, with Committee next meeting on 31 March for interviews and a decision.

22 RECRUITMENT OF A CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND INTERIM DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

Following the recent resignation of the Chief Executive and feedback provided by the Peer Challenge in January 2025, Members considered a report which requested Members choose a preferred solution for the recruitment of a Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service,

The report also requested that Members provide a steer to Officers regarding the options

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Members would like further detail upon to ensure the statutory requirement to have a Head of Paid Service was complied with on 1 July 2025 onwards. It was stressed to the Committee that all of the interim options would require further consultation and discussion, and as such the report was seeking an initial steer as to which option should be further explored.

Finally, Members were asked to consider a request to recruit to the Director of Operations and Commercial post, pending a full review of the Senior Management team.

Debate ensued with the Committee initially focussing on the request for an Interim Director of Operations and Commercial Services. There was lengthy and very robust discussion, on the need for this post and whether an alternative approach could be considered with a number of suggestions made.

Some Committee Members suggested permanent recruitment should be undertaken and that the services in the portfolio should be re-organised. Some sought to understand whether there was internal candidate that could step-up for an interim period particularly in respect of the waste function. A large number of Members were concerned at the cost of an interim solution and that the interim solution could in fact end up being a 12 month period.

In responding to Members' comments, Officers reminded the Committee that they were charged with appointing Chief Officers only, and changes to services portfolios would need to be looked at holistically as part of a wider restructure, as they would impact other posts and require consultation. Any interim solution could only be appointed on like for like basis, at this stage.

Members continued to debate a number of scenarios and discussed why such a situation had arisen.

With continued concerns about how costs could escalate, the Committee were advised that they could consider a part time interim and could express a maximum time limit for an interim arrangement to be in place.

With the Committee acknowledging the real time impact the post being vacant was having, it was acknowledged that a short term, quick resolution was required, despite the reservations. However, Members indicated their requirement for potential candidates to be waste specialists, procured on a 3–4-day week basis, for a maximum period of 6 months. Furthermore, there would be a requirement for the selected candidate to be present on site and hands on.

In light of the suggestions made during the discussion which could not be pursued and concerns expressed, the Committee were of the view that the need for a complete senior management structure was becoming more pressing.

It was proposed and seconded that the Chief Executive be requested to prepare options as to how any final structure may look and how services may be realigned under new Director Portfolios.

On being put to the vote the additional recommendation was **CARRIED**.

Debate then turned to the preferred options for the recruitment of Chief Executive/ Head of Paid Service, with five options proposed in the paper for a permanent solution and three options proposed for the interim period.

A further interim solution was raised by a Member, along with rationale for the proposal, however other Committee Members were not supportive of the suggestion and it was withdrawn for the discussions.

Following much discussion the Committee's general consensus was that, in terms of the long-term solution, Option 1 like for like recruitment was the favoured approach.

In respect of the interim period Option 2 – a shared arrangement was the preferred option, with Members outlining some attributes they would like candidates to have. The Committee were reminded that this option would require consultation with other Councils and discussions would need to be held regarding financial payment and the amount of time which would be allocated to West Lindsey District Council. A further report would be submitted to Committee following initial approaches.

Members thanked Officers for the work undertaken and following much discussion on being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the resignation of the Chief Executive be noted and Mr Ian Knowles be thanked for his service and leadership over the last 5.5 years as Chief Executive and a further 5.5 years as Director of Resources;
- (b) having considered the options, in Section 2 of the report, the preferred approach in relation to the long-term arrangement, be Option 1 – recruitment of a permanent Chief Executive/ Head of Paid Service on a like-for-like basis (the recruitment process, including choosing the desired recruitment agency, be delegated to the People Service Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee;
- (c) having considered the options, contained in section 3 of the report regarding the interim arrangements for the statutory role of Head of Paid Service from 1st July 2025, the preferred approach be Option 2 – a shared arrangement, and as such a report be submitted to the Committee to consider the desired option in further detail;
- (d) recruitment of an interim Director to the role of Director of Operational and Commercial Services, for a maximum period of 6 months on a 3–4-day week basis be approved, with oversight of the recruitment delegated to Chief Executive and People Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Chief Officer Employment Committee pending a review of the Senior Management Team; and
- (e) the Chief Executive be requested to prepare as soon as possible, options as to how any final senior management structure may look and how services

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may be realigned under new Director Portfolios.

The meeting concluded at 6.12 pm.

Chairman