

## **Divisions Affected - All**

### **COUNCIL 13 December 2022**

#### **Appointment of Chief Executive and designation as Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer**

#### **Report by Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. The Council is RECOMMENDED to approve**
- 1.1 The appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service position to Dr Martin Reeves with a start date to be confirmed.
- 1.2 A spot salary designation of £225,000 following a process of external benchmarking. The County Council pay policy should be amended to reflect this.
- 1.3 The designation of Dr Martin Reeves as Returning Officer for all elections with effect from the post holder commencing their role.

### **Executive Summary**

2. Following the cessation of the Section 113 agreement which established joint management arrangements between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council in February 2022, the post of Chief Executive Officer and Head of Paid Service became vacant and was subsequently filled on an interim basis. A comprehensive national search and recruitment campaign has been undertaken and a full selection and appointments process was led by the Remuneration Committee.
- 2.1 Following the completion of this process, Council is now recommended to appoint a permanent post holder.
- 2.2 The postholder (Dr Martin Reeves) will be designated Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer. The County Council's Monitoring Officer will continue to undertake the duties of the Returning Officer following their appointment to the role at the meeting of Council on 8 February 2022 until the post holder takes up their role, whereupon the duties and accountabilities in

accordance with Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 will transfer.

## Report Details

3. For this appointment, Oxfordshire County Council's Remuneration Committee has been supported and taken independent advice from Gatenby Sanderson, recruitment consultants selected following a procurement process earlier in the year.
  - 3.1 The post was advertised nationally in September 2022 with a closing date of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2022. During this time, Gatenby Sanderson held discussions with members of the Remuneration Committee and key stakeholders to support further understanding of requirements of the role. Political group leaders were kept apprised of the process throughout.
  - 3.2 Following the closing date, Gatenby Sanderson provided Oxfordshire County Council Remuneration Committee with a recommended longlist. . The Remuneration Committee met on 19 October 2022 to agree a longlist and undertake recruitment training. Guidance was provided by Gatenby Sanderson and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
  - 3.3 Following technical interviews and executive profiling, a shortlisting report was compiled and the Remuneration Committee agreed a shortlist at their meeting on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
  - 3.4 The final stages of the process were completed as set out below.
    - Key staff stakeholders panel – 25 November 2022
    - System stakeholders panel – 25 November 2022
    - Member's stakeholders panel – 28 November 2022
  - 3.5 The final selection panel and interview took place at a formal meeting of the Remuneration Committee on Monday 28 November 2022. The Committee were advised by Gatenby Sanderson and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
  - 3.6 The Remuneration Committee were impressed by the overall standard of the candidates. After careful consideration of all the assessment information as well as the final interviews and panel feedback its decision is to recommend the offer of appointment of Dr Martin Reeves, the current Chief Executive of Coventry City Council whom it considered demonstrated the skills and experience to meet the future needs of Oxfordshire County Council and the challenges ahead.
  - 3.7 The Remuneration Committee further recommends that the appointment be offered on a starting salary of £225,000 per annum with other conditions of employment being in accordance with those determined for Chief Executives nationally by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives. This salary will be subject to an annual cost of living award (as agreed as part of the National pay negotiations) and reviewed externally no less

than every three years. The County Council's pay policy will be amended to reflect this. The pay range was informed by an externally commissioned salary benchmark review undertaken earlier in the year, consideration of subsequent national pay awards and comparable national roles that have been appointed in the preceding months.

- 3.8 At their meeting on 28 November Remuneration Committee reviewed and endorsed the Chief Executive appraisal process as set out in the JNC guidance and including arrangements for 360 feedback, these annual arrangements will be implemented when the candidate takes up the position.
- 3.9 Subject to Council agreeing the Remuneration Committee's recommendations in this report and the completion of necessary checks, it is anticipated that Dr Martin Reeves will take up the appointment in 2023 following completion of notice periods.

## **Financial Implications**

4. The existing budget provision for the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services is £190k. The recommended salary of £225k is within benchmark comparisons but £35k higher than the existing budget provision. This will be managed within the overall budget for the Council in 2023/24 and any ongoing impact addressed as part of the 2024/25 Budget and Business Planning process.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Corporate Director Finance (S151)  
[lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Legal Implications**

5. There is a duty placed on every Local Authority under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to designate one of its officers as Head of Paid Service.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer and Director of Law and Governance  
[anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staff Implications**

6. The Chief Executive Officer's core responsibilities include setting and executing the organisations strategy, building and overseeing the executive team and by extension the wider workforce.

## **Equality and Inclusion Implications**

7. The recruitment and selection process was conducted fairly in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures and taking account of its Equalities Policy.

## **Sustainability Implications**

8. The Chief Executive will have direct responsibility for ensuring the Council rises to the strategic leadership challenge of responding to the Climate Emergency declaration and to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier County. The Chief Executive will also be expected to ensure that the Council leads by example in all its activities as well as taking a lead role in influencing and working with partners across all sectors locally, regionally, and nationally to meet sustainability objectives.

## **Consultations**

9. Remuneration Committee and political group leaders have co-designed the recruitment and appointments process.
10. Stakeholder panels have taken place with key staff, system stakeholders and Members as part of the selection process and have been facilitated by the recruitment consultant, Gatenby Sanderson. Feedback from these panels has been incorporated into the overall selection process and considered by the appointments panel, Remuneration Committee.

**KAREN EDWARDS**

Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Karen Edwards, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

December 2022