

3. RECRUITMENT TO POST OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE (SF)

1. Purpose of the report

- Agree in principle the proposed recruitment process
- Appoint a six Member' recruitment panel
- Agree proposed arrangements for the interim period between the Chief Executive leaving and a new Chief Executive starting

Key Issues

- The job description and person specification of the Chief Executive post is reviewed before advertising.
- It is proposed that the recruitment process be delegated to a Members' recruitment panel, chaired by the Chair of the Authority, with the remit to bring back a recommendation on the appointment of a new Chief Executive to the 20 May Authority meeting.
- It is proposed that interim arrangements are as set out in this report.

2. Recommendations

1. That the Authority proceeds, having noted the resignation of the current postholder, to appoint to the full-time post of Chief Executive (on an updated job description and person specification); Head of Paid Service and National Park Officer, at the existing salary grade (£88,985 - £94,456).
2. That the updated job description and person specification at Appendix 1 to this report be approved subject to any minor changes being delegated to Head of People Management (PM) in consultation with the Chair of the Authority
3. That the recruitment process as set out below and already started under delegated powers be agreed.
4. That a Members' recruitment panel of six Members be appointed (3 Secretary of State and 3 Constituent Authorities Members) and chaired by the Chair of the Authority – with the terms of reference to undertake the roles of the panel as set out in the report and to recommend to the Authority a Chief Executive appointment, noting that the appointment is subject to approval by the Authority meeting.
5. That the appointments for the statutory roles of Head of Paid Service and National Park Officer and the role of Interim Chief Executive (based on the current job description) and Deputy Chief Executive be as follows: -
 - 5.1 The current Deputy Chief Executive, Andrea McCaskie, Head of Law becomes the Interim Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and National Park Officer for the period beginning with the last working day service of the current Chief Executive Sarah Fowler until the starting working day of the new Chief Executive.
 - 5.2 That an interim Deputy Chief Executive be appointed for the same period, and for that purpose authority is delegated to the current Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority. At the expiry of this period the interim post holder under 5.1 above shall revert to the role of Deputy Chief Executive for a period of 6 months to support the familiarisation and induction of the new Chief Executive.

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The Chief Executive post is the Head of Paid Service and the Authority is required to appoint to this statutory role under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Authority is also required by virtue of Schedule 7 of the Environment Act 1995 to have “at all times” a person appointed by the Authority to be responsible to the Authority for the manner in which the carrying out of its different functions is co-ordinated - A National Park Officer. Although it is possible to make other arrangements for fulfilling this role e.g. a shared Chief Executive post- this is not proposed and a full time replacement for the current post holder, but on an updated job description and person specification, is recommended. The updated job description and person specification are attached at Appendix 1.
4. Standing Orders require the appointment of an officer designated as the Head of Paid Service to be approved by the full Authority (Standing Orders 5.5). As part of the appointment process in respect of the National Park Officer, Natural England has to be consulted (Standing Orders 5.1 referring to the requirement of the Environment Act 1995) and further details on the role that Natural England will take in the recruitment process will be confirmed at this meeting.
5. This post plays a pivotal role in leading the Authority’s staff to achieve all our Corporate Strategy and National Park Management Plan outcomes, and to rise to future challenges and opportunities.

Background Information

6. Recruitment Process

Due to the urgency to act the following recruitment process has been put in hand under delegated powers:

a) Tenders have been sought for a specialist executive recruitment agency to assist with the recruitment. Although the process will remain controlled by the Authority the specialist help will ensure the best candidates possible are attracted and will include support to: promote the opportunity; search for potential candidates; present a long list of candidates to the Members’ recruitment panel; promote the Authority as an employer of choice; finalise a new job description. The closing date for tenders was 20 December and Members will be updated on the successful agency at the meeting.

b) The help of two external advisors are being sought:

- the leadership development consultant who has been working with the management team during 2021 and has experience of the Authority in this capacity;
- a Chief Executive of a National Park Authority which is similar in size and has similar challenges to this Authority, to sit on the interview panel.

c) A timeline which is subject to change but includes the provisional milestone dates of: 28 February closing date of advertisement and candidate search; 7 March long list; 28 March shortlisting day; 11 April virtual engagement and psychometric assessment day; 27-28 April final assessment at Bakewell assessment centre; 29 April decision and conditional offer; 20 May recommendation on Chief Executive appointment to the Authority, is attached at Appendix 2.

7. Members’ Recruitment Panel

It has been the practice in the past to delegate the Chief Executive recruitment process to a group of Members forming a panel working with the Head of PM. There is the

opportunity for a number of Members to be involved as the assessment centre will include different assessment modules requiring a number of assessors. It is suggested that the panel is made up of the different categories of Members within the membership and is chaired by the Chair of the Authority. The number of Members needed to successfully run the 3 assessment modules is 6. Therefore, the panel should comprise 3 Members who are Secretary of State appointments and 3 who are appointed by the Constituent Authorities. It is assumed that both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority will be on the panel. For equality reasons, the recruitment panel should be gender-balanced. The role of the panel and provisional dates are set out in the schedule appended to this report at Appendix 2. It is important that panel Members are available for these dates including the face to face assessment centre.

8. Interim Period Between Appointments

As part of the current management structure, the existing Deputy Chief Executive becomes the Interim Chief Executive from the Chief Executive's last working day until the appointment of the new Chief Executive.

Another Deputy Chief Executive is to be appointed (under delegated arrangements to the current Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Chair of the Authority) to support the Interim Chief Executive. On appointment of the new Chief Executive, the Interim will revert to the role of Deputy Chief Executive for a period of 6 Months to support the familiarisation and induction of the new Chief Executive.

Members Role

9. That Members

- a) Agree the recruitment process as set out in this report, in principle, as it may change as we proceed and take advice, including the steps already taken.
- b) Note that as part of this process the job description and person specification for the post has been updated (see above) and is presented as part of this report in accordance with Standing Orders at Appendix 1. It is being requested that any minor changes to either the job description and/or person specification be delegated to the Head of People Management in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
- c) Note the provisional timeline for recruitment and key milestone dates at Appendix 2.
- d) Appoint a six Member recruitment panel with the terms of reference as described above.
- e) The Members' recruitment panel will bring forward a recommendation on the Chief Executive appointment at 20 May Authority meeting.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

10. The use of an external agency to assist with recruitment is proposed to be funded from savings made by a gap between appointments if this happens and as a last resort as a call on the 2021/22 underspend.

Risk Management:

11. The report explains the statutory roles that the Authority must appoint to. The risk of an unsuccessful process is addressed by (1) the proposed review of the job description and person specification; (2) the use of external specialists and (3) the proposed recruitment

process to assess the potential candidates for the role. The report explains that this post plays a pivotal role in leading the Authority's staff to achieve all our corporate objectives and to rise to future challenges and opportunities. Failure to fill the post will put the Authority at long term risk of failing to achieve these objectives and/or failing to meet future challenges and opportunities.

Sustainability:

12. Our Corporate Strategy for 2019-24 focuses on enhancement and conservation, actively supporting communities in the National Park to feel part of this special place, and diversifying and re-awakening public support and love of national parks.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

13. The Authority has begun to identify the steps it needs to take to achieve a diverse workforce. These are reflected in recruitment policies and procedures. The progress of protected groups through the organisational hierarchy is monitored and reported on. Recruitment and selection is monitored at all stages of the process by protected characteristics. Standing Orders require that arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way that it is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it.

Background papers (not previously published):

14. None.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Updated job description and person specification

Appendix 2 - Schedule of proposed stages in the recruitment process

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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