

Report of the Chief Executive

**Director of Adult Services and Assistant Director of Adult Services
– Chief Officer Recruitment Process**

Summary

1. At Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee on the 24th November 2014 members were asked to consider a recommendation to ‘engage a recruitment agency to support the selection committee with the recruitment process’ for the positions of Director of Adult Services and Assistant Director of Adult Services. It was requested that further information was presented back to the committee.

Background

2. At Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee on 24th November 2014 members were asked to consider a number of recommendations which would allow appointments to be made to positions of Director of Adult Services and Assistant Director of Adult Services. An appointments committee was authorised to conduct the final interviews, select a successful candidate and make an offer of employment (subject to the necessary employment procedures).
3. The report also recommended that to support the recruitment to these posts that we ‘engage a recruitment agency to support the selection committee with the recruitment process’. It was requested that further information and options were presented back to the committee before a decision was made.

Recruitment Agency / Executive Search

4. Adult Services is a difficult market to recruit in, Skills for Care have conducted detailed research into the recruitment and retention of staff working in adult social care and highlight the difficulties many local authorities have in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly at senior level.

5. To attract the strongest field of candidates with the right knowledge and skills the positions will need to be advertised nationally. It has also been recommended that an external recruitment agency with a proven track record of executive recruitment in Local Government Adult Services is engaged to support the appointment committee.
6. Typically a recruitment agency will offer the following elements of an executive search process;
 - **Use of Databases** – a good consultancy will have existing databases of many prospective candidates who they have either worked with previously or who have signed up to a consultancy website. Many of these candidates will have also set up ‘job alerts’ for when a relevant role comes up. The consultancy can search these databases and contact people who meet the specification as a way of getting in touch with ‘active’ job seekers.
 - **Desk research** – Research the strongest relevant Councils or organisations and then identify the key individuals in those organisations who are ready to make the move up to the next level and contact with them about the opportunity and encourage them to apply.
 - **Recommendations from contacts** – Talking to key contacts in the sector about the role and getting their thoughts on the role itself and any candidates who they may know of. This can be a good way to find out about candidates who may not be actively looking but are well thought of and viable. They would make contact with them about the opportunity and encourage them to apply.
 - **Knowledge of good candidates** – This is perhaps the key element of the search. A good consultancy will have in depth experience in Local Government and a proven track record in the sector and will have met or spoken to many potential candidates. Some may have applied for roles previously, others may have chosen not to apply for jobs but may be looking now. Drawing upon the experience of potential candidates an agency will create a target list of relevant people and approach them directly to let them know about the opportunity.
 - **Ongoing specialist support throughout the recruitment process** – Acting as a point of contact between the appointments committee and prospective candidates; running

technical assessment; psychological assessment; and providing written profiles of candidates which will allow the committee to undertake a detailed assessment of each candidate's strengths and areas of development which will eventually inform an appointment decision.

7. In addition to any support provided by a recruitment agency it is important for the selection committee to give consideration to what might attract the person we would want to apply for a post in York. Department budget; size of management team; the size and reputation of the authority; location; the specific challenges for the role; the people they will be working with; and scope for their own personal development and pay are all likely to be factors which the committee will need to give consideration to when developing the approach to the recruitment. A recruitment agency with knowledge of the recruitment market can help to shape the offer to make it attractive to potential candidates.

Options/Analysis

8. The full Chief Officer Recruitment process was agreed by council on 2nd May 2008. Appendix A shows the standard process but also information about the options and potential costs which can be considered at each stage.
9. Although some parts of the process can be carried out by the HR team, there is not the specialist expertise, capacity or detailed knowledge of the Adult Services recruitment market to carry out an executive search.
10. For posts at this senior level candidates would normally expect that there will be executive search activity taking place by a recruitment agency and therefore senior candidates tend to be less active in the recruitment market and are less likely to be regularly reviewing advertised vacancies.
11. Without a targeted executive search it is recommended that there would need to a prominent online recruitment campaign using multiple professional journals. This approach would increase advertising costs.
12. It will be challenging to attract candidates to roles which are below market rates for other comparable positions and therefore the executive search is likely to be even more important if we are to attract a strong field of candidates for these positions.

13. As the council has to cover the statutory responsibilities in Adult Services a delay or not recruiting would mean that we would have to continue with the existing interim arrangements.

Council Plan

14. Making an appointment to these positions will contribute to delivering the Council Plan and its priorities, in particular Protecting Vulnerable People.

Implications

15. The following implications have been considered:
 - **Financial** – The salary and recruitment costs will be managed from within existing departmental budget.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – A procurement tendering exercise would need to be undertaken to engage a recruitment agency to support the recruitment activity to fill the position.
 - **Equalities** - There are no equalities implications.
 - **Legal** – The Appointments Committee is created pursuant to S.102 (1)(c) of the local Government Act 1972 and its terms of reference are to exercise the functions of the Council in relation to the selection and appointment of the successful applicant in respect of the vacant positions of Director of Adult Services and Assistant Director of Adult Services. The proceedings of the Appointments Committee are likely to be held mainly in exempt session due to the nature of the information that it will be considering.

In circumstances where the appointing committee agrees, without any member voting against, S.17 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 provides that the distribution of seats on a sub-committee need not comply with the political balance requirements contained in Part 1 of that Act.

The process of appointing officers of this level is regulated by the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001. Amongst other things, these regulations require that an appointment committee must include at least one member of the Cabinet and further, that no formal offer of appointment may be made until all members of the Cabinet have been informed of the details of the intended appointee, and have raised no objection within the specified period, (usually 5 clear days).

- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no crime and disorder implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications.
- **Property** – There are no property implications.
- **Other** – There are no other implications.

Risk Management

16. The risk of no or delayed appointment could risk the lives of the council's more vulnerable residents.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee:

Engage a specialist recruitment agency to support the selection committee with the recruitment process.

Reason: To progress appointments and reduce risks highlighted in the report in relation to these critical roles.

Contact Details

Author:

Mark Bennett
Head of Business HR

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Kersten England
Chief Executive

**Report
Approved**



Date 28 November
2014

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Legal: Andrew Docherty, Assistant Director, IT Democratic & Legal Services

Finance: Richard Hartle, Finance Manager

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Appendix:

A. Chief Officer recruitment process