

The Highland Council

Appointments Panel External Bodies/ALEOs

Minutes of Meeting of the **Appointments Panel** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday 25 August 2015 at 4.05pm.

Present:

Dr D Alston
Mr J Gray
Mr D Millar

Mr A Rhind (substitute)
Mrs M Smith

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Morris, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development

MR J GRAY IN THE CHAIR

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs M Davidson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Review of Procedure for Appointment of Directors

Prior to introducing the report, the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development explained that no expressions of interest had been received in respect of the Highland Opportunity Limited vacancy and consequently this was the only item of business to be considered at the meeting.

Continuing, the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development explained that at the last meeting the Panel had requested that the remit be reviewed. Therefore, there had been circulated Report No AP/01/15 by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development which presented the issues for the Panel's consideration and discussion in order to review the remit of the Panel and make a recommendation to Highland Council as to how the appointment process could be made more effective.

During discussion, concern was expressed with the current procedure whereby the Panel made a recommendation to Council and there was a risk this would be challenged or not approved. It was felt that this called into question the purpose of the Appointments Panel and, if it was to continue, it was important that the Panel had credibility. It was also suggested that there could be reluctance from potential applicants to submit an expression of interest which might later be circulated publically for approval as part of the Highland Council papers.

It was therefore proposed that the Appointments Panel should seek full delegated authority to make appointments but that the process needed to be further strengthened by the External Body/ALEO providing details of the specific skills set required and a scoring matrix using the criteria set by the External Body/ALEO to determine the most suitable candidate. However, a request was made for the scoring matrix not to be un-necessarily complicated.

With regard to whether the membership of the Panel should be increased, the importance of being objective was highlighted as was the need for openness and transparency. However, the Panel recognised that there were benefits in inviting an external person to join the Panel but it was felt that it was important that they had knowledge of the external body and experience of the skills required for the Board. It was therefore felt that the Chairman of the relevant External Body/ALEO should be invited to join the Panel for that meeting. With regard to any potential equality of votes in making an appointment, and in order to ensure greater objectivity, it was further suggested that the Chairman of the External Body/ALEO should be appointed Chairman of the Panel for that meeting with casting vote, should this be necessary. In the instance that the Chairman of the External Body/ALEO was a councillor, it was proposed that the Chief Executive of the organisation be invited to join the Panel as an alternative.

Thereafter, the Panel **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the Council that the following remit revisions be made to strengthen the Procedure for Appointment of Directors to External Bodies/ALEOs etc:-

- i. The Appointments Panel be granted full delegated authority to appoint directors to External Bodies/ALEOs etc subject to the following:-
 - a. The Chair of the relevant External Body/ALEO (or Chief Executive if the Chairman was a councillor) be invited to join the Panel and be appointed Chairman of the Panel (with casting vote) for that meeting;
 - b. The External Body/ALEO provide details of the specific skills set required; and
 - c. A scoring matrix using the criteria set by the External Body/ALEO be utilised to determine the most suitable candidate.

The meeting concluded at 4.30 pm.