

**The Highland Council
Recruitment Panel: Depute Chief Executive**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Recruitment Panel** held REMOTELY on Thursday, 11 November, 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

Present:

Mr A Christie
Dr I Cockburn
Mr J Gray

Mr A Henderson
Mr A Jarvie
Mr B Lobban

Officials in attendance:-

Mrs D Manson, Chief Executive
Ms E Barrie, Head of HR, Resources & Finance Service
Mrs L McGunnigle, HR Manager, Resources & Finance Service
Mr A MacInnes, Administrative Assistant, Performance and Governance Service

Mr B Lobban in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr R Bremner, Mrs M Davidson, Mrs T Robertson and Mr B Thompson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Exclusion of the Public

The Panel **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

4. Proposal for Executive Search Invitation to Quote: Recruitment Process for Depute Chief Executive

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. RP/1/21 by the HR Head of Service which highlighted that in May this year the Council advertised the role of Depute Chief Executive, however a suitable candidate was not appointed.

The report presented proposals for the engagement of an Executive Search organisation to support the Council in recruitment to the vacant Depute Chief Executive post. Executive Search agencies had been contacted and had expressed an interest in submitting a quote for their services in alternative approaches to recruitment of a new Depute Chief Executive. Executive Search agencies contacted were confident that they could attract candidates for this post and had their own network of contacts.

Members discussed the recruitment process going forward and in particular the need for more member involvement during the recruitment process, such as member involvement in interviewing long leet candidates. Members were in agreement that the person filling this post should be based in the Highlands. There were challenges in filling vacancies at a senior level and attracting candidates that met the job and person specification.

Given that the Panel did not make an appointment to this post recently, the Panel required to decide if the recruitment process should start again or be delayed. Some Members expressed the view that re-advertising in such a short time frame may result in the same outcome as before and were in favour of a delay until the new Council was formed after the local government elections in May, 2022. However, the majority of Members were in favour of starting the recruitment process again given that the Council had agreed to recruit to this post; the time the process would take; that there was evidence from a recent recruitment exercise in another public sector authority that there was substantial interest in Senior public sector posts and an Executive Search organisation would actively look for potential candidates along with the post being advertised.

In terms of the option of inviting quotes from Executive Search agencies already contacted, it was suggested that they be invited to quote for the Depute Chief Executive post and the soon to be vacant post of Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place. It was confirmed that as there was already an agreed senior officer structure approved by Council the Panel did have authority to advertise the ECO Communities and Place post.

Thereafter, the Panel **AGREED**:-

i that the 5 Executive Search Agencies detailed in the report be invited to quote for the provision of services for the recruitment process for the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place; and

ii a further meeting of the Panel to consider the quotes be held on Thursday, 25 November, 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.