

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 17 December 2019

**Reporting officer:** Chair of Appointments Panel

**Subject:** Appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To present Council with the recommendation of the Appointments Panel that was constituted to consider the appointment of a successor to the present Chief Executive when he retires on 31 March 2020.

### **Recommendations:**

That the Council confirms the appointment of Mr Stuart John Bobby to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Gravesham Borough Council with effect from 1 April 2020.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council's current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, Mr David Hughes, gave notice of his intention to retire from the Council's service on 31 March 2020 and, to enable the Council to undertake a comprehensive recruitment process for a successor, kindly gave more notice than was contractually required which is sincerely appreciated.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an Appointments Panel was constituted to oversee the recruitment process drawing upon Members appointed by the Council to the Appointments Board. Five Members were appointed to the Appointments Panel; these being Councillors Burden (Chair), Croxton, Sullivan, Meade and Aslam.
- 1.3 Penna, a company that specialises in recruitment of senior officers in the public sector, was appointed to assist in the recruitment process, including advertising the vacancy in relevant local government journals and on its own website. Penna also holds a list of potentially suitable candidates who were contacted directly to make them aware of the vacancy.

- 1.4 The advertisement appeared in the Municipal Journal with a closing date of 15 November 2019 and a total of seven candidates applied for the position, of which 2 were not recommended by Penna. A long listing of the seven candidates was undertaken by the Chair of the Appointments Panel and the current Chief Executive in consultation with Penna. The outcome of this was that the five candidates recommended by Penna were agreed to progress to the next stage of the process which were technical interviews to test the candidates' knowledge, skills and readiness to assume a Chief Executive role.
- 1.5 The technical interviews of the five candidates took place on 26 November 2019 at Penna's offices in London and were conducted by Mr Ben Cox of Penna and Mr Neil Taylor, Chief Executive of Bassetlaw District Council (who acquired significant knowledge of this Council as he was the lead officer of the recent Peer Challenge undertaken at the authority).
- 1.6 Following those interviews Mr Ben Cox met with the Appointments Panel on Monday 2 December 2019 to discuss the recommendations he and Mr Taylor were making as a result of their assessment of the candidates' respective performances. The Panel considered the feedback given on each of the candidates and agreed a shortlist of three to go through to final interviews on 9 December 2019.
- 1.7 During the morning of 9 December the candidates were first interviewed individually by a Stakeholders Panel to test their approach to working in partnership with external bodies. The Panel consisted of Chief Inspector Neil Loudon, Police Commander for Dartford and Gravesham, Mr Ian Piper, Chief Executive of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, Mr Richard Hicks, Deputy Chief Executive of Medway Council, Mr Matthew Norwell, Chief Executive of Thames Gateway Kent Partnership, and Mr Tim Woolmer, Policy & Partnerships Adviser at Kent County Council. The Panel ranked the candidates in the order in which the Panel unanimously believed they had demonstrated a sound understanding of the requirements for and barriers to effective partnership working.
- 1.8 The three candidates were then joined at a networking lunch by the Appointments Panel and a number of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Members.
- 1.9 There then followed intensive interviews of the three candidates by the Appointments Panel. Candidates were required to give a presentation to the panel not exceeding seven minutes in duration without the use of visual aids on a topic of which they had been given several days' notice. Each candidate was then asked an extensive series of questions by individual members of the Panel with each candidate receiving precisely the same questions put in the identical order.
- 1.10 After the interview of each candidate the Appointments Panel received the ranking given to that candidate by the Stakeholders Panel following the process in the morning.
- 1.11 Following the conclusion of the final interview the Appointments Panel considered carefully the performance of each of the candidates and reached the unanimous view that the candidate who in every part of the selection process had demonstrated the strongest range of knowledge, skills, political acumen and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Council was Mr Stuart John Bobby.

1.12 The Appointments Panel, therefore, resolved unanimously to recommend to the Council that it appoints Mr Stuart John Bobby to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Gravesham Borough Council with effect from 1 April 2020. This was communicated to Mr Bobby who has confirmed that he will accept the position if confirmed by the Full Council.

## **2. Background Papers**

2.1 There are no background papers pertaining to this report.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
<b>Legal</b>	The council must appoint one of its officers as Head of Paid Service.
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	Budgetary provision exists for the post for which the appointment is being made.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	There are no risks associated with the recommendation in this report.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<p data-bbox="416 501 1469 607"><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p data-bbox="416 645 1485 763">a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? No</p> <p data-bbox="416 790 1474 909">b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p data-bbox="416 958 1490 1077">c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>. N/A</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p data-bbox="416 1124 1506 1279">a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p data-bbox="416 1328 1449 1447">b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p data-bbox="416 1496 1506 1592"><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	The Chief Executive post supports the delivery of all of the council's corporate objectives.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no crime and disorder implications resulting from the recommendation in this report.
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	There are no digital and website implications resulting from the recommendation in this report.
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	There are no safeguarding children and vulnerable adults' implications resulting from the recommendation in this report.