

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

RECRUITING TO SENIOR OFFICER ROLES

Appointments Committee Date	15th September 2010
Officer	Peter Jones, Deputy Chief Executive Dilys Wynn, Director: People Services

Purpose of Report	To initiate member discussion and share current thinking on suggested proposals for revised arrangements for recruiting to senior officer roles
Recommendations	The Appointments Committee is recommended to: (i) Endorse the current thinking on the recruitment process for senior officer roles (ii) Agree the proposed revised arrangements to the process of recruiting to senior officer roles as set out in paragraph 4 in this report (iii) Recommend to the Constitution Committee that subject to their formal approval of the proposals, including the reduction in the size of the interviewing panels to appropriate numbers, that the revised process is recommended to full council for changes to the Constitution.
Resource Implications	No additional resource implications. More cost effective and efficient processes.

MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

1. Purpose of Report

To share thinking on the current arrangements for the recruitment of senior officer roles and recommend revised arrangements which maintain the key involvement of elected members in the appointments process and modernise the procedures. This report excludes the appointment arrangements for the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service.

2. Introduction and background

Members will be aware of the agreed arrangements for the recruitment of senior officer roles as set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 3, paragraph 3.2 and Table 3.4, Duties of the Appointments Committee and Part 4, Officer Employment Procedure Rules).

The role of Members in the appointment of employees to the County Council is regulated by statute which is incorporated into the Council's Constitution and is restricted to involvement in recruitment decisions for appointments to roles including temporary and interims at 2nd tier or above only.

While such appointments may not be made by the Executive, the Council could choose to delegate all responsibility for senior appointments to the Head of Paid service, subject to the consultation process set out in paragraph 2 of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. Some years ago, Gloucestershire chose to vest that responsibility with the Appointments Committee. (Note: The appointment of the Head of Paid Service must be confirmed by full Council).

3. Current Process

The current process was approved in 2003 and has been largely unchanged since then. It requires input from Members via the Appointments Committee at three separate stages. Since that date, a number of changes, including the introduction of web-based recruitment, more sophisticated methods of assessing candidates and the increasing number of joint appointments at senior level makes our current arrangements increasingly outdated. In particular, the following issues and difficulties have been identified:

- (i) The current procedure adopted by the Council for Members to be involved at three stages: namely, the decision to recruit, short-listing and selection, makes consistent membership at all three stages almost impossible to achieve. Lack of continuity is considered to be poor practice and could lead to less rigorous recruitment decisions being made;
- (ii) There are a number of Members potentially involved in senior appointments. This prevents the Council from keeping Members up to date with current legal issues pertaining to recruitment and modern recruitment practice;
- (iii) Members wish to have better briefing on candidates before the interview day. The Council is increasingly supplementing interviews, (proven to be one of the least reliable elements of a recruitment process) with selection tests and personality profiling. This means that there is a large amount of recruitment material to be shared with the interview panel in advance of the final recruitment day;

- (iv) Current arrangements mean that interview panels are large, and larger still when it is a joint appointment with a partner. The first joint appointment the Council sought to make had a joint interview panel of seven. This reduces the effectiveness of the interview process. Following a review, revised Panel membership was agreed for the most recent senior joint appointments. The Council could extend the principle of smaller panels to all appointments.
- (v) Even in the prevailing financial climate, recruiting to senior positions in local government is proving challenging. Over the last 6 months, the two joint appointments made had to be advertised twice before suitable candidates could be found and the Director of Finance role remains vacant following the failure to attract the right calibre of candidate. There is a suggestion that the length of time involved in our process is leading to the loss of good candidates. While it is likely that we will recruit to very few senior appointments during the next couple of years, when we do, it will be to a business critical role.

4. Proposed Alternative Approach

To overcome the limitations of the current arrangements, whilst assuring the key input of elected members into the process, the proposal is to revise the current recruitment process to include the following features:

a) Focus the Role of the Appointments Committee on the Selection Process

- **Group Director Roles**

The decision to appoint to a role and the details of the recruitment process to be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, Leader and Lead Opposition Member.

- **Director Roles**

The decision to appoint to a role and the details of the recruitment process to be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

b) Shortlisting

- **Group Director Roles**

This would be drawn up by the employing manager (Head of Paid Service or relevant Group Director) in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, Leader and Lead Opposition Member.

- **Director Roles**

This would be drawn up by the employing manager (relevant Group Director) in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

In the case of **joint appointments**, the shortlisting would take place as above, in conjunction with the partner organisation.

c) Members key roles in the interview and selection day

Members would continue to play a key role in the interview and selection day to make the selection decision. Members would be pre-briefed on all relevant selection test material and personality profiling results to enable them to make better informed decisions.

In the case of joint appointments, the panel would consult with representation from the partner organisation and both parties would need to be satisfied with the appointment decision.

Advantages of this approach:

- Reduces the number of unnecessary meetings required and makes the process quicker and more efficient
- Keeps to a minimum the number of candidates lost due to delays in the process
- Eliminates the need for Member substitutions during the process.

Note: The process for appointing to short term interim positions would remain unchanged.

d) Adjusting the Size of Panels

The size of Panels is relatively large and the issue is exacerbated by the involvement of partners in joint appointments. The proposal is for the Appointments Committee to operate henceforward through a sub-committee acting as an interviewing panel comprising three members (still politically balanced for the life of the current Administration) and ask partners to keep their representation to two.

Note: The proposal to introduce sub committees will require a decision by the Constitution Committee and full council.

Advantages of this approach:

- Makes the advance briefing of Committees and recruitment decisions easier
- Saves on administration and attendance costs
- Improves the image of the Council with candidates
- Provides the opportunity to retain consistency of membership on the Appointments Committee, allowing better updating on recruitment practice and legislation.

e) Terms and Conditions of senior roles

Any proposed changes to the terms and conditions of service for senior roles would remain the responsibility of the Appointments Committee.

5. Recommendations

The Appointments Committee is recommended to

- (i) Endorse the current thinking on the recruitment process for senior officer roles
- (ii) Agree the proposed revised arrangements to the process of recruiting to senior officer roles as set out in paragraph 4 above
- (iii) Recommend to the Constitution Committee that subject to their formal approval of the recommended changes, including the reduction in the size of the interviewing panels to appropriate numbers, that the revised process is recommended to full council for changes to the Constitution.

Peter Jones, Deputy Chief Executive
Dilys Wynn, Director: People Services
25th August 2010