

Report to the North Northants Joint Committee from the Statutory Officers working Group

Chair. Cllr Ian Jelley

The working party has held two meetings since the last NNJC meeting. The first on the 15th August, and the second on 4th September.

The minutes of the first meeting are attached to this report as an appendix.

At the first meeting the working party was given an update on the draft Structural Change Order, and a briefing on the role of the working party going forward.

The working party had been given a draft Scoping document in advance of the meeting which outlined the purpose of the working group, the outcomes required, timetable of completion of the tasks and the proposed methodology.

The primary function of the working group is to consider and prepare a report for the Shadow Authority for prior approval by the NNJC which will recommend an appointment process for the selection of: -

- Interim Head of Paid Services
- Interim Chief Finance Officer
- Interim Monitoring Officer

and if appropriate a Returning officer for the purpose of the first Unitary elections. The above to be within the provision of the Structural Change Order.

In addition to recommend a recruitment and selection process for:-

- Permanent Head of Paid Service.

The group noted that it was possible for MHCLG to request that the permanent positions of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer would also be filled by the 31st December 2020.

The group agreed for the Chair to ask the NNJC whether this work should be undertaken, as it was likely that this would need to be required at a later date anyway.

The meeting considered the rest of the Scoping report, and other outcomes required. This process will be supported by Sam Maher (Director of HR for East Midlands Council) and would scrutinize the work of the group and provide a level of independent assurance in the ongoing work.

It was also requested and agreed that Sarah Macintosh and Stella Jinks from HR at KBC and CBC would be supporting the working group to produce draft job descriptions and person specifications for all of the proposed positions as detailed earlier in this report.

The deadline for the completion of the work was considered and proposed as the end of November 2019

HR officers advised members in relation to interim appointments and the potential for recruitment from deputy statutory officers or even secondment from officers from other authorities if need be.

The group also discussed the process of recruitment by in house processes or external agencies as both processes had been used before and were very successful, and the use of professional bodies (Penna) in respect of internal and external advertising of positions, to be discussed further at the next meeting

The appointment of a Returning Officer for the elections in 2020 is likely to be included in the SCO in November, so was not part of the current debate

Finally, it was also recommended by members that NNJC consider the branding and aesthetics of any potential adverts for interim and permanent positions and give advice to the working party.

Members also agreed for contact to be made with LGSS and EMC HR in respect of the colleagues from these authorities and the work being done by the working group.

Attached as an appendix is the updated Scoping Document with confirmation of the resolutions from the first meeting in points 7 of the report.

The group agreed to a second meeting to be held on 4th September at Corby Cube.

Meeting 4th September 2019

This meeting was to discuss the draft job descriptions, person specifications T & Cs timetables, advertisements and appointments processes.

The target dates for appointments for the interim and permanent post were discussed and confirmed.

The interim positions and draft job descriptions and person specs were discussed, and will be further discussed and agreed at the next meeting. HR confirmed that these positions would be advertised internally at each North Northants authority and NCC.

Members asked for an understanding of how officers appointed to the interim positions would work in relation to their own positions in their Borough or District Council and the job they would be expected to do within the Shadow Authority? HR to clarify at the next meeting.

In respect of the permanent position/s members asked that officers' contact two or three successful unitary authorities to secure job descriptions and person specifications for the statutory positions, so that they could be compared to the drafts that we had based on borough and district descriptions.

Members felt that there needed to be a clear understanding of any differentials between the descriptions and responsibilities between borough & district officers and unitary officers, as we had not been in this position before and this was a much bigger job than we had been involved in before. This would include the importance of

a good sound understanding of a balanced budget, safe and legal services from day one and commitment to the new Unitary Authority to regain public and business confidence in delivering good services in North Northamptonshire.

Members asked if we could confirm what we think the budget for the new Unitary is likely to be, and felt this must be included in the job descriptions and advertisements.

Positions would be advertised Internally and externally.

A further meeting is arranged for 25th September to progress the work of the group agree and propose the advertising and appointments process.

The members of the group were happy that we were making good progress, and further reports will be brought back to the future meetings of the NNJC.

Councillor Ian Jelley

Chair of the Statutory Officers Appointments Working Group.