



Council

Interim Chief Executive Arrangements

Date: 15 February 2023

Class: Part 1

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Outline and recommendations

This report asks Council to agree that Jennifer Daothong is confirmed as the interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from March 4 March 2023, pending the permanent recruitment of a postholder.

Council is recommended:

1. To agree to appoint, from 4 March 2023, Jennifer Daothong, Executive Director Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, as Interim Chief Executive, including designation as Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, and Electoral Registration Officer.
2. To authorise the Director of People and Organisation Development to agree an appropriate honorarium in respect of the additional duties associated with acting as Interim Chief Executive.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report asks Council to agree that Jennifer Daothong is confirmed as the interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from March 4 March 2023, pending the permanent recruitment of a postholder.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to agree interim Chief Executive arrangements, to fulfil the statutory duties of the Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, and Electoral Registration Officer, and to ensure that the Council has continuity of leadership direction at the highest level pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. To agree to appoint, from 4 March 2023, Jennifer Daothong, Executive Director Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, as Interim Chief Executive, including designation as Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 3.2. To authorise the Director of People and Organisation Development to agree an appropriate honorarium in respect of the additional duties associated with acting as Interim Chief Executive.

4. Background

- 4.1. It was announced on 19 January 2023, that Kim Wright would be leaving Lewisham Council to take up a new role as Chief Executive of Brent Council.
- 4.2. The Council is required to have a designated statutory post of Head of Paid Service which is usually vested in the position of Chief Executive. As such, to ensure fulfilment of that statutory post and to continue executive leadership responsibilities, Council is recommended to agree that Jennifer Daothong, the Executive Director for Housing Regeneration and Public Realm, is appointed as the Interim Chief Executive from 4 March 2023.
- 4.3. In recognition of the interim appointment, Council is asked to authorise the Director of People and Organisation Development to agree an appropriate honorarium in respect of the duties associated with acting as Interim Chief Executive.

5. The Recruitment Process

- 5.1. It is proposed that the Director of People and Organisation Development seek external advice on the appropriate timing to commence a recruitment process.

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6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Local government and Housing Act 1989 section 4 requires that the Council designate one of its officers as the Head of Paid Service (usually the Chief Executive). The decision to appoint to this statutory role is by law, a decision for full Council.
- 6.2. In addition, section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer for the election of councillors. Traditionally, the Council has appointed this independent statutory role to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is also usually the Council's Electoral Registration Officer appointed under section 8.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1. There are no equality implications.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The cost of the salary of the current Chief Executive is met from existing budgets. Any honorarium to be paid to an Interim Chief Executive, and any related costs arising to also put cover in place for this interim's substantive position would be funded first from the existing relevant service budgets. Should the interim arrangement costs exceed the available service budget allocations for the substantive posts the difference will be met from corporate provisions and reserves.
- 8.2. The eventual actual costs of the recommendations in this report will depend on the duration and rates for the cover arrangements agreed. The section 151 officer confirms there are sufficient working balances in place to cover these interim costs.

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