

CHIEF OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PANEL
Wednesday 20th May 2020

Appendix F

Present:

Councillors Richard Austin, Peter Bedford, Michael Cooper, Anne Dorrian, Paul Goodale, Martin Griggs and Paul Skinner.

Officers:

People Services Manager and Democratic Services Manager

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Paul Goodale be appointed as Chairman.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Anne Dorrian be appointed as Vice-Chairman.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

4. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTIONS

No notification of substitutes was received.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from the Members of the Panel.

**6. BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL AND EAST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE – SHARING OF STATUTORY OFFICERS**

The Panel considered a report on a proposed creation of a strategic alliance between Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council which was also due for consideration by Cabinet on 20 May 2020 and full Council on 10 June 2020.

As part of the proposed arrangements for the strategic alliance was a proposal for the two authorities to share the three Statutory Officers i.e. Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

The recommendations contained within the full report on the strategic alliance which fell within the remit of the Chief Officer Employment Panel for consideration were as set out below:

- i) That Robert Barlow becomes Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service of East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council. East Lindsey District Council shall formally employ Mr Barlow, who shall, for the purpose of facilitating the Strategic Alliance, be seconded to Boston Borough Council as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, effective from 1st July 2020.

Thereafter, East Lindsey District Council will contribute 67 per cent of the cost of Mr Barlow's remuneration and Boston Borough Council will contribute 33 per cent of the same. Consultation should commence immediately.

- ii) That Michelle Sacks becomes Joint Monitoring Officer of East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council. Boston Borough Council shall formally employ Ms Sacks, who shall, for the purpose of facilitating the Strategic Alliance, be seconded to East Lindsey District Council as Monitoring Officer under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, effective from 1st July 2020.

Thereafter, East Lindsey District Council will contribute 67 per cent of the cost of Ms Sack's remuneration and Boston Borough Council will contribute 33 per cent of the same. Consultation should commence immediately.

- iii) That Paul Julian becomes Joint S151 Officer of East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council. Boston Borough Council shall formally employ Mr Julian, who shall, for the purpose of facilitating the Strategic Alliance, be seconded to East Lindsey District Council as S151 Officer under Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972, effective from 1st July 2020.

Thereafter, East Lindsey District Council will contribute 67 per cent of the cost of Mr Julian's remuneration and Boston Borough Council will contribute 33 per cent of the same. Consultation should commence immediately.

The People Services Manager, based on the proposed termination date, outlined the likely process by which the current Chief Executive of Boston Borough Council would leave the authority, including timescales, potential cost implications and associated risks to the Council with possible mitigation.

Reference was also made to full Council being required to approve settlement packages in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and Pay Policy. An option that could be explored with the Monitoring Officer was whether full Council could delegate to COEP

Panel Members raised concerns regarding the potential financial costs for the Council which did not correlate with the financial information contained in the report in respect of year one costs.

There was discussion regarding the process for the strategic alliance and Panel Members reached a consensus that the proposal in the report was not the preferred option. The agreement for creating a strategic alliance should be considered in the first instance, involving scrutiny and public consultation, and then, if agreed, a national recruitment campaign undertaken to appoint a Chief Executive with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to lead a joint authority.

Whilst some Members knew Mr. Barlow, others did not and the view was expressed that it was difficult to make such an important decision without having all the relevant

information on which to base it. A meeting between the Panel and Mr. Barlow or having sight of his CV would have been helpful.

Having considered the report and information available and debated the issues in detail the Panel;

RESOLVED

That it be recommended to Full Council that the proposed appointment of Robert Barlow as Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service of East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council, and the proposed arrangements for the sharing of Boston Borough Council's Statutory Officers, i.e. the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer with East Lindsey District Council be not progressed at this time for the reasons set out below:-

This Council agrees that a Strategic Alliance needs to be the best fit for Boston, therefore, at this time we propose that we do not proceed with the options before us.

This council currently has sufficient resources to maintain adequate levels of service delivery and to balance the budget in 2021/22 and given those facts, we propose the following to Full Council:

- **That exploratory discussions are held with elected members and officers of other local authorities who are potential partners in such an alliance**
- **That Scrutiny committees are kept fully involved and appraised of all such discussions**
- **That any future decisions are made after full consultation with elected members, along with the residents of the Borough of Boston.**