

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COUNCIL

09 April 2024

### Report of the Leader of the Council

#### Part 1 - Public

#### Matters For Decision

#### 1 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

##### Summary

**This report proposes the appointment of a new Chief Executive, Damian Roberts, based on the recommendations of the appointed Panel of Members. The report further proposes the continuation of a number of interim arrangements until the new Chief Executive starts at the Council.**

#### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Council's Constitution contains Officer Employment Procedure Rules in relation to the appointment of the Chief Executive that provide:

- 1) The Full Council will approve the appointment of the Chief Executive following the recommendation of such an appointment by a Panel of Members appointed by the Council for that purpose. This Panel will include at least one member of the Executive.
- 2) The Full Council may only approve the appointment of the Chief Executive where no well-founded objection has been made by any member of the Executive.

1.1.2 At the meeting of Full Council on 12 December 2023, the formation and appointment of a Panel of Members was approved, tasked with making the recommendation of appointing a permanent Chief Executive.

1.1.3 The appointment panel consisted of the Leader of the Council, Cllr Matt Boughton the Deputy Leader, Cllr Martin Coffin and the Leader of the Opposition, Cllr Anita Oakley.

1.1.4 The recruitment and selection process took place throughout January to March 2024 led by the specialist recruitment search and selection company Gatenby Sanderson. The process was rigorous and contained multiple different interview stages and processes for candidates to undertake.

- 1.1.5 There was significant interest in the role with 23 applications received. Of these 23 applications received, 10 were 'longlisted' and interviewed. Following this stage, 5 candidates were shortlisted for the final stage interview process which included psychometric testing and a final day of interviews consisting of three separate interview panels.
- 1.1.6 The final stage interviews took place on 13 March 2024. The candidates were interviewed by three different panels. The first panel consisted of three different representatives from partner organisations. The second panel consisted of Cabinet Members and Group Leaders. The third panel was the appointed Panel of Members as set out in 1.1.3 above.

## **1.2 Recommendation to appoint Damian Roberts as Chief Executive**

- 1.2.1 Taking into consideration the feedback from all the interview panels as well as the performance throughout the process, the appointed Panel of Members is recommending to Full Council that Damian Roberts should be the new Chief Executive (fulfilling the statutory role of Head of Paid Service) of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.
- 1.2.2 The panel is confident that Damian has the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to lead the Council into the future and deliver our ambitious targets. Damian will bring a wealth of experience gained in a number of senior roles in Local Government.
- 1.2.3 Damian is currently Chief Executive at Surrey Heath Borough Council. In his current role, Damian has developed a five-year Council Strategy which he took through the largest public and stakeholder engagement programme in the borough's history. He is also the lead Chief Executive across Surrey for Climate Change, Economic Development and Housing.
- 1.2.4 Damian was Chief Operating Officer, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (2018-2021) and was responsible for the majority of the Council's staffing, revenue and front-line services. He was Strategic Director, Waverley Borough Council (2012-2018). During this time Damian led the Council's organisational and culture change programme and was responsible for the Council's operational functions and budgets.
- 1.2.5 Damian was Director of Service Transformation & Partnerships, London Borough of Croydon (2010-2012) and their Director of Transformation and ICT (2005-2010). He was Head of Strategy, Performance and Equalities, Tower Hamlets Council (2002-2005), Head of Corporate Strategy, Islington Council (1999-2002), Assistant Head of Executive Office, London Borough of Croydon (1991-1999) and a Local Government Management Trainee with them (1989-1991).

1.2.6 Damian has an MSc Degree in Business Administration (MBA) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Management.

### **1.3 Recommendation to appoint to the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer**

1.3.1 As well as recommending appointing Damian Roberts as the next Chief Executive, the appointed Panel of Members is further recommending to appoint Damian to the separate roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

### **1.4 Continuation of the Interim Chief Executive and associated posts**

1.4.1 If Members of Full Council accept the recommendation to appoint Damian Roberts as its next Chief Executive, then we can expect Damian to begin the role on 1 July 2024 which allows him to serve his notice period with his current employer.

1.4.2 It is important to continue the interim arrangements the Council currently has in place beyond 14 May 2024 which was agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 12 December 2023.

1.4.3 The current interim arrangements have provided a significant amount of stability and leadership for the organisation since the retirement of Julie Beilby. The current interim arrangements consist of:

- Adrian Stanfield – Interim Chief Executive
- Sharon Shelton – Interim Deputy Chief Executive
- Joy Ukadike – Interim Monitoring Officer
- Adrian Stanfield – Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

1.4.4 I am further recommending the Interim appointments set out above continue until 30 June 2024 or until such time as Damian Roberts starts as Chief Executive should there be any unforeseen delays.

### **1.5 Legal Implications**

1.5.1 The proposals outlined in this report are compliant with the council's Constitution and Pay Policy Statement.

1.5.2 This report ensures that the Council has appointed persons to the statutory posts of Head of Paid Service (Interim Chief Executive) and Monitoring Officer (Interim Monitoring Officer).

1.5.3 Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, it is not possible for the Head of Paid Services to also be the Council's Monitoring Officer.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.6.1 There are no additional costs associated with the continuation of the proposed interim appointments. The proposed interim appointments result in a temporary short term management saving.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

1.7.1 The recommendations in this report have been made in response to operational need and therefore mitigate against risk.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.8.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.9 Policy Considerations**

1.9.1 Pay Policy Statement

## **1.10 Recommendations**

1.10.1 To appoint Damian Roberts as the permanent Chief Executive from 1 July 2024.

1.10.2 To appoint Damian Roberts to the separate roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer from 1 July 2024.

1.10.3 To continue the interim appointment of Adrian Stanfield as Interim Chief Executive from 15 May 2024 to 30 June 2024 or until such time as Damian Roberts starts as Chief Executive.

1.10.4 To continue the interim appointment of Sharon Shelton, Director of Finance & Transformation as Interim Deputy Chief Executive in addition to their substantive post from 15 May 2024 to 30 June 2024 or until such time as Damian Roberts starts as Chief Executive.

1.10.5 To continue the interim appointment of Joy Ukadike, Head of Legal & Democratic Services as Interim Monitoring Officer in addition to their substantive post from 15 May 2024 to 30 June 2024 or until such time as Damian Roberts starts as Chief Executive.

1.10.6 To continue the appointment of Adrian Stanfield to the separate roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer from 15 May 2024 to 30 June 2024 or until such time as Damian Roberts starts as Chief Executive.

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