

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held at 7.00 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 18 SEPTEMBER 2003

Present:- Councillor M A Hibbs – Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, H D Baker, P Boland, J F Cheetham, K J Clarke, R J Copping, A Dean, R F Freeman, M A Gayler, E J Godwin, R T Harris, E W Hicks, B M Hughes, S C Jones, A J Ketteridge, R M Lemon, D J Morson, J P Murphy, V Pedder, M J Savage, E Tealby-Watson and P A Wilcock.

Officers in attendance: B D Perkins, J B Dickson, C Hughes, M J Perry and M T Purkiss.

C25 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C A Bayley, C A Cant, R P Chambers, D Corke, S Flack, M L Foley, J I Loughlin, A Marchant, J E Menell, G Sell, F E Silver and A M Wattebot.

C26 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Councillor A Dean, the Leader of the Council, reminded Members that at its Annual Meeting the Council had agreed the appointment of the Chief Executive's Appointment Panel. The Panel's tasks included:

- 1 To work directly with a consultant on the recruitment of a Chief Executive.
- 2 To determine the job description and person specification.
- 3 To approve the advertisement and selection process.
- 4 To shortlist and interview suitable candidates and agree an offer of appointment subject to ratification by the Full Council.

After a careful two stage assessment and selection process the Appointment Panel recommended to Members that Mr Alasdair Bovaird be confirmed as the Council's preferred candidate for the Chief Executive role.

The Appointment Panel were assisted throughout the process by its retained Consultant, Mr John Watley of Solace. Mr Watley assessed each of the applicants against the person specification and offered a summary of each applicant to the Appointment Panel. Following debate the Appointment Panel selected 7 candidates to invite to stage one of the recruitment process: an assessment centre on 15 September. After offer of interview one candidate withdrew after successfully gaining alternative employment.

During stage one on 15 September, the six candidates sat psychometric tests, took part in an assessed group discussion, an in-tray exercise/briefing of a fictitious Leader and Chief Executive and delivered a presentation on an unseen topic. Four Solace consultants assessed the candidates and the Appointment Panel observed various stages. The Head of Personnel was also involved throughout the day.

The candidates were assessed against the person specification and on 16 September John Watley met with the Appointment Panel and outlined the assessor's findings. As a result the Appointment Panel invited two candidates to interview and to deliver their prepared presentation.

The Appointment Panel assessed each candidate against the agreed person specification and selected Mr Bovaird who currently works for Argyll and Bute Council (Unitary) as Head of Corporate Policy as the preferred candidate.

The Leader thanked the Panel and Mr Watley for their hard work over the past months.

He then recommended on behalf of the Appointment Panel that

Mr Alasdair Bovaird be appointed Chief Executive of this Council, subject to formal offer and his acceptance of appointment.

This was seconded by Councillor A J Ketteridge.

Councillor Murphy said that he felt that the Council was rushing into the appointment and he would have been happier if all Members had met with Mr Bovaird. However, Councillor Godwin pointed out that all Members had an opportunity to meet all candidates on 15 September.

Councillor Freeman asked whether the appointment was subject to a probationary period and suggested that all Members should be able to take part in the appraisal process to assess the efficacy of the appointment.

The Head of Personnel and Office Services confirmed that all appointments were subject to a probationary period of six months. In relation to the appraisal of a Chief Executive she said that in the past, the Council had invited a representative from the East of England Regional Assembly to jointly carry out the appraisal with the Leader of the Council. She stressed that during the induction period targets would be set to assist the appraisal process which must be evidence based.

In response to questions from Councillor Jones, it was confirmed that the appointment process was essentially the same as that for the appointment of the previous Chief Executive, with the added involvement of Council as required by the Local Government Act 2000. She also confirmed that the consultant's fees had amounted to £12,500.

Councillor Tealby-Watson asked whether a limited form of a 360° appraisal could be undertaken. The Head of Personnel and Office Services confirmed that this could be possible, but the review must be measured against the targets set.

Councillor Cheetham said that the Council had agreed the appointment of the selection panel and had put faith in the Members of that panel. The panel had worked extremely hard and all Councillors had been given the opportunity to meet the candidates. Councillor Morson agreed with this view and said that the Council must be optimistic and positive. Councillor Wilcock agreed and

said that Members should vote unanimously to confirm the panel's recommendation and give their active support to the new Chief Executive.

Councillor Tealby-Watson expressed particular thanks to the Head of Personnel and Office Services for her excellent work during the recruitment and appointment process. She also thanked the officers, the consultants and fellow Members of the panel for the work which they had undertaken.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Appointment Panel that Mr Alasdair Bovaird be appointed Chief Executive of this Council subject to formal offer and his acceptance of the appointment be approved.

C27 **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman informed Members that the draft final report (consultation draft) Executive Summary for the Stansted/M11 Corridor Development Option Study had now been received and would be discussed during the next committee cycle. The closing date for comments was 31 October 2003.

The Chairman also reminded Members about the reception for the 33rd Engineer Regiment on 29 September and asked that they advise officers as soon as possible whether or not they would be attending.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.