

PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE
REMOVING POLITICAL BALANCE

Report of the Assistant Director for
Legal & Democratic Governance and Monitoring Officer

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The current Chief Executive of the Council (Caroline Simpson) has been nominated as the preferred candidate for appointment to the role of Group Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Fire & TfGM which is due to be considered by a meeting of the Combined Authority on Friday, 22 March 2024.
- 1.2 The Appointments Committee met on 21 March 2024 to consider the initial arrangements for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.
- 1.3 This report seeks the Council's approval of the enlargement of the membership of the Appointments Committee following a recommendation from the committee that the Council Meeting exercises its discretion to appoint the Leader of the Independent Ratepayers Group and the Leader of the Edgeley Community Association to the committee for the purposes of this appointment process.

2. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Appointments Committee has delegated responsibility for all steps relating to the employment of a Chief Executive, except the appointment (and dismissal) of the office holder. The appointment of a Chief Executive must be approved by a decision of the Council Meeting.
- 2.2 The Appointments Committee met on 21 March 2024 to consider the arrangements for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive. As part of the package of resolutions agreed by the Committee, it was resolved "That the Council Meeting be recommended to give approval to the appointment of the Leader of the Independent Ratepayers Group and the Leader of the Edgeley Community Association as further members of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year".
- 2.3 It is noted that the Leader of the Green Group already has a seat on the Committee and as a consequence, these proposals would ensure that all political groups have representation on the Committee.
- 2.4 To facilitate this, the membership of the Appointments Committee would need to be increased from seven to nine and the Council would need to adopt alternative arrangements in respect of appointments to this Committee (and not an allocation strictly in accordance with proportionality under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989). This may be approved provided no member votes in opposition.

2.5 While the proposed arrangements can only last until the next Annual Council Meeting, it is noted that it is likely that the recruitment process will extend into 2024/25, and as a result, it is likely that the Annual Council Meeting will need to further resolve to adopt alternative arrangements in relation to the Appointments Committee to ensure continuity of cross-party oversight of the recruitment process.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Appointments Committee is required to be politically balanced by virtue of section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The power to make appointments to politically balanced committees may only be exercised by the Council Meeting.

3.2 Section 17 (1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 permits the Council to make appointments which do not conform to the requirement for political balance if no member of the full Council votes against the alternative arrangement.

3.3 Regulation 20 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990/1553 requires that notice of a proposal to make alternative arrangements is given to each member of the Council. This requirement may be fulfilled by the publication of a summons to attend a full Council meeting giving notice of a proposal to make such an arrangement.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That approval be given to an increase in the membership of the Appointments Committee to nine for the remainder of the municipal year.

(2) That approval be given to the adoption of alternative arrangements in respect of the appointment of members to the Appointments Committee (not being strictly in accordance with proportionality under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) and to exclude the committee from the calculation for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

(3) That Councillors Anna Charles-Jones and Matt Wynne be appointed to the vacancies.

(4) That it be noted that the Annual Council Meeting may need to further resolve to adopt alternative arrangements in relation to the Appointments Committee to ensure continuity of cross-party oversight of the recruitment process should this extend into the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Vicki Bates on Tel: 0161 474 3219 or email:

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