

**REPORT TO:** East Lothian Council

**MEETING DATE:** 24 August 2021

**BY:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Appointment of Executive Director for Council Resources

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise Council of the decision of the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee to appoint a new Executive Director for Council Resources, a vacancy that resulted from the retirement of Jim Lamond, the previous post holder.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Council is asked to note the decision of the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee to appointment Sarah Fortune as Executive Director for Council Resources, noting that all formal pre-employment checks have been carried out and that an offer of appointment has been issued and accepted.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following receipt of Jim Lamond's intimation of his intention to retire, an internal/external recruitment campaign was launched to appoint to the post of Executive Director for Council Resources. The Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee was convened on Friday 9 July 2021 to make this appointment, and after formal interviews had taken place, the Sub-Committee appointed Sarah Fortune, the Council's then Head of Finance.
- 3.2 The external recruitment campaign successfully attracted 12 applications from which 4 individuals were shortlisted and invited to attend an Assessment Centre Day conducted by SOLACE in Business on 6 July 2021, followed by formal interview by the Sub-Committee on 9 July 2021.
- 3.3 During the Assessment Centre Day the candidates underwent rigorous independent external pre-interview candidate profiling. This involved psychometric testing, a competency interview and a paper exercise. All of these exercises were facilitated independently by SOLACE in Business.

The Chief Executive also conducted informal interviews with each of the shortlisted candidates.

- 3.4 The Sub-Committee comprised Councillors Hampshire, McMillan, Bruce and Currie.
- 3.5 At the interview the candidates were required to give a presentation to the Sub-Committee and to respond to a number of pre-set competency-based interview questions. The Sub-Committee was advised by SOLACE in Business, the Chief Executive and was supported by the Service Manager – People and Governance and an internal HR Adviser.
- 3.6 Relevant pre-employment checks were carried out as regards the preferred candidate, which were all found to be acceptable. Sarah Fortune has now taken up her position as Executive Director for Council Resources and a campaign to recruit a new Head of Finance is underway. Ms Fortune will continue to act as the s95, Chief Finance Officer meantime.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial - None
- 6.2 Personnel – None other than those set out within this report.
- 6.3 Other - None

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

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<b>DATE</b>	9 August 2021



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CHIEF OFFICER AND HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE  
For the Post of  
Executive Director for Council Resources**

**Held on 9 July 2021  
Via Microsoft Teams**

**Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee:**

Councillor Norman Hampshire (Chair)  
Councillor John McMillan  
Councillor Lachlan Bruce  
Councillor Stuart Currie

**In Attendance:**

Evelyn Dougherty, Solace in Business

**Council Officials:**

Monica Patterson, Chief Executive  
Kirstie MacNeill, Service Manager - People and Governance  
Zoe McFadzean, Business Partner - HR and Payroll

Candidates began their interview by giving a ten-minute presentation to the Sub-Committee on the topic **“With reference to the strategic priorities of East Lothian Council, what short, medium and long term goals would you set yourself if appointed to the post of Executive Director - Council Resources?”** This was followed by a series of set competency-based questions from Sub-Committee Members.

Prior to the interviews, Evelyn Dougherty provided an overview on the outcome of the online assessments exercise undertaken by the candidates and an analysis of each of their performances during the Assessment Day which helped inform the Sub-Committee’s final deliberations. At the end of the formal interview the Sub-Committee discussed the relative merits of the candidates with assistance from Ms Dougherty, the Chief Executive and other officers present. The Sub-Committee then proceeded to score the candidates. Sarah Fortune scored highly in both the presentation topic and in all of the competency questions posed and was accordingly declared to be the preferred candidate.

The Service Manager – People and Governance explained that the usual pre-employment checks on the preferred candidate would be carried out prior to formal appointment.