

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 18 February 2025

BY: Executive Director for Corporate Resources

SUBJECT: Appointment of Chief Executive and Interim Arrangements

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the decision of the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee to appoint Laurence Rockey, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, as the new Chief Executive of East Lothian Council, and of various matters that arise as a result, including interim arrangements that have been put in place prior to the new Chief Executive taking up position.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the decision of the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee to appoint, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, Laurence Rockey to the post of Chief Executive.
- 2.2 To approve the minute from the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee, 3 February 2025, attached at Appendix A.
- 2.3 Subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, to appoint Laurence Rockey as Head of Paid Service on the day he takes up post, expected to be 22 April 2025.
- 2.4 To note the interim arrangements that have been put in place prior to the new Chief Executive taking up post.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 4, requires the Council to designate a person as “Head of Paid Service”. This is a statutory function conducted by the Chief Executive.

- 3.2 On 25 November 2024, Monica Patterson, then Chief Executive, submitted her resignation from Sunday 16 February 2025.
- 3.3 A public recruitment and selection campaign has since taken place supported by SOLACE in Business. Following a series of rigorous recruitment exercises including independent external pre-interview candidate profiling, psychometric testing, a competency interview led by an independent SOLACE professional advisor, a written exercise, presentation and questioning from a stakeholder panel, the Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee conducted a formal interview on 3 February 2025. The Sub-Committee agreed to appoint Laurence Rockey – currently Director of the Scotland Office to the post, subject to formal pre-employment checks.
- 3.4 Laurence Rockey will complete his formal notice period with his current employer and, subject to satisfactory formal pre-employment checks, is expected to take up his role on 22 April 2025.
- 3.5 At the December Meeting of Council, Council delegated authority to the Head of Corporate Support, following consultation with the Council Leader and political group leaders, to put in place interim arrangements to cover the role of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) prior to a new Chief Executive taking up post.
- 3.6 Lesley Brown, Executive Director has agreed to take on the position of Interim Chief Executive during this interim period prior to the new Chief Executive taking up post. This will ensure effective leadership during this period.

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 – The costs of the recruitment process were met from the existing staffing budget for the Chief Executive.
- 6.2 Personnel – The terms and conditions of employment applicable to the post of Chief Executive are enshrined within the SJC Conditions of Service for Chief Officials and the salary is nationally determined with other local terms and conditions applying in accordance with East Lothian Council employment policies.

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 [Report to Council 10 December 2024](#)

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DATE	10/02/2025



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
CHIEF OFFICER AND HEAD TEACHER
APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**3 FEBURARY 2025
JOHN MUIR HOUSE**

Chief Officer and Head Teacher Appointments Sub-Committee:

Councillor Norman Hampshire (Chair)
Councillor John McMillan
Councillor Shamin Aktar
Councillor Lyn Jardine
Councillor George McGuire

In Attendance:

Amy Billington, Head of Executive Recruitment and Assessment, SOLACE in Business

Council Officials:

Hayley Barnett, Head of Corporate Support
Paul Ritchie, Service Manager People and Council Support

Declarations of Interest:

None

Each candidate was seen in turn. Candidates began their interview by giving a ten-minute presentation on the same pre-set subject to the Sub-Committee. This was followed by a series of set competency-based questions from the Sub-Committee members supplemented by additional questions where required.

Following the conclusion of formal interviews, Members received feedback from SOLACE officials on the feedback from the Stakeholder Panel. The Sub-Committee then discussed the relative merits of each candidate. The Sub-Committee scored the candidates. Laurence Rockey scored the highest and the Sub-Committee agreed to appoint him, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.

The Service Manager – People and Council Support explained that the pre-employment checks would be carried out prior to formal offer being made.

Signed

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Convener of the Sub-Committee