

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF OFFICER ASSESSMENT PROCESSES
Meeting: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Date: 19TH August 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Executive Committee on 18th March 2014 it was agreed that each of the assessment processes for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers should be reviewed. This has now been done and the purpose of this report is to seek approval of the proposed assessment processes for the Chief Executive and for Chief Officers.

2. ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

- 2.1 To identify the appropriate assessment processes, current practice for posts of a similar level within other Local Authorities, other public bodies and the private sector were assessed. The findings and proposals have been discussed with Corporate Management Team and issued to Trade Unions and all Chief Officers for comment. The processes have been amended accordingly to take on board feedback received.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 The common, best practice themes emerging from the exploration of good practice for Chief Executive assessment processes are as follows:
- An annual assessment process with a review at 6 months;
 - Appointment of an Independent Adviser to facilitate the assessment process;
 - Assessment of the Chief Executive against performance/key objectives;
 - Assessment of the Chief Executive against leadership competencies using 360 feedback.
- 3.2 The proposed Chief Executive Assessment process is contained at Appendix 1 and includes each of these elements. This includes an assessment against agreed business objectives and an assessment against leadership competencies. The Leadership competencies against which it is proposed the Chief Executive is to be assessed are contained at Appendix 2. These include the “SOLACE Chief Executive Competency Specification” competencies plus some recognised “best practice” personal effectiveness leadership competencies/behaviours.

- 3.3 It is proposed that an on-line tool is sourced to manage the 360 feedback element of the process. This will enable the feedback to remain anonymous and encourage honest and constructive feedback. This will also be developed to encourage those providing feedback to provide examples to support their ratings.
- 3.4 The proposed process includes the establishment of an Assessment Panel consisting of the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and the Provost. It also proposes the appointment of an Independent Adviser to facilitate the assessment process for the Chief Executive. The Independent Adviser will:
- Brief the assessment panel on the purpose of the process and their role;
 - Coach panel members to ensure independent and constructive feedback against key objectives;
 - Prepare a “Summary of Performance Report” which incorporates the views of the Chief Executive and panel members on performance against each key objective;
 - Meet with the Chief Executive to ensure understanding of the feedback in the “Summary of Performance Report” and “Personal Development Report” and identify areas for discussion at the meeting with the assessment panel;
 - Meet with the assessment panel in advance of their meeting with the Chief Executive to agree areas to be explored at the meeting and coach them to encourage a positive and constructive meeting and outcome;
 - Facilitate the review meeting between the Chief Executive and the assessment panel;
 - Where required, facilitate a 6 monthly review meeting between the Chief Executive and the assessment panel.
- 3.5 In order to appoint an Independent Adviser it is proposed that Falkirk Council approach SOLACE plus 2 other appropriate organisations to invite them to tender to undertake the role detailed in the Chief Executive Assessment process and as outlined above.
- 3.6 SOLACE and the Improvement Service are at the early stages of developing more comprehensive competencies for chief executives which will include the skills, attitudes and behaviours of successful chief executives and senior executives, similar to the CPD Framework for Elected Members, and with a focus on entrepreneurial and collaboration skills. It is therefore proposed that this activity is monitored closely and once available, the Chief Executive assessment process updated as appropriate in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Assessment Panel.

4. CHIEF OFFICER ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 All employees, including Chief Officers, currently have the opportunity to use the Achievement and Personal Development Scheme (APDS) for assessment which is consistent with the best practice themes emerging from the exploration of good practice.
- 4.2 The review of best practice highlighted that the majority of Local Authorities assess all Chief Officers against leadership competencies. This is consistent with findings from the review of best practice in other public bodies and the private sector.

It is therefore proposed that Chief Officers continue to utilise the APDS as an appropriate assessment process with the addition of 360 assessment against leadership competencies to assist with the identification of personal development objectives.

- 4.3 A copy of the Assessment Process for Chief Officers is contained at Appendix 3. The Leadership competencies against which it is proposed Chief Officers are assessed are contained at Appendix 2.

These include the “SOLACE Corporate Director” and “SOLACE Head of Service” generic competency specifications, amended to take account of feedback, plus some recognised “best practice” personal effectiveness leadership competencies/behaviours. The same on-line tool referred to at paragraph 3.3 will be used to support the 360 feedback process for Chief Officers. For clarity, it is suggested that as the lead officers for their functions, the Chief Finance and Chief Governance Officers use the competencies applicable to the role of Director for their posts.

- 4.4 As the SOLACE and Improvement Service activity detailed at paragraph 3.6 may also impact on Chief Officers, it is proposed that once this is available, the Chief Officer assessment process is also updated as appropriate, in line with developments of the SOLACE/Improvement Service project.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (a) Approve the proposed Chief Executive Assessment process;
- (b) Agree to arrangements being made for the appointment of an Independent Adviser as outlined in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.5;
- (c) Approve the proposed Chief Officer Assessment process.

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 9 July 2014

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Chief Executive Annual Assessment Process

Appendix 2 – Chief Executive, Director and Head of Service Competence Framework

Appendix 3 – Chief Officer Annual Assessment Process (APD Scheme)