

Paper 5.2 Heart of SW LEP Board meeting

November 2017

Report title: Recruitment of LEP Chief Executive

Report theme: Board

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Purpose of the report

To agree the approach to be used to recruit the HotSW LEP Chief Executive due to the retirement of the current Chief Executive in July 2018 and set out the key next steps over coming months.

Recommendations

To agree the recommended approach and delegate the supervision of the process to the F & R committee with the intention of commencing the recruitment process following the January 2018 LEP Board meeting.

Background

The HotSW LEP Chief Executive is expected to retire at the end of July 2018 at his normal retirement age of 65. It is anticipated the LEP will require a new Chief Executive to be appointed. There are two potential 'macro' developments over the autumn and spring of 2018 that may need to be taken into account in considering this recruitment and the job specification to be used:

1. Govt is undertaking a review of LEPs – due to report in the Spring 2018. This may alter the emphasis of our LEP going forward.
2. The HotSW Joint Committee will be established. This may have implications if partners wish to continue this development work and develop a Combined Authority and / or bring together in some way LEP and Local Authority activities

It seems likely that neither of these macro developments will have clarified by the time recruitment needs to start. Indeed given the Brexit timetable and broader economic environment it must be uncertain whether the relevant agendas will be clarified at any specific point!

Clearly the new CEX will need to be comfortable operating in a world subject to change and uncertainty – as the only certainty is uncertainty. In order to recruit a new Chief Executive to meet this timetable it is therefore proposed to:

- Agree Recruitment firm and the approach proposed at November 2017 Board
- Agree job specification at January 2018 Board and commence a recruitment process thereafter
- Make an appointment in March / April 2018
- Commence employment in June/July 2018 to shadow existing Chief Executive for (say) 1 month

It is proposed that interviews are structured in phases. The first phase to sift from a long list to a short list of appointable candidates. The second phase to be structured around a presentation with Q & A session to the full LEP Board with a few additional guests from key stakeholders (such as Chambers, District Authorities). Following this the selected candidate should meet the Chairman for a final conversation and agreement of contract. Key elements to be agreed at this LEP Board meeting are therefore:

- The F & R committee should oversee the process
- We should recruit the new Chief Executive with the support of a recruitment firm. It is envisaged that we will not undertake a full / traditional headhunting exercise but advertise the appointment on job boards and through social media – as well as through directors and stakeholder networks. We will also put a micro site on our website to encourage responses. However, support will be required with this process and applicant handling.

A firm to undertake this work will be needed – in October the following five firms were invited to submit their proposals:

- Smart Search
- Gatenby Sanderson
- Penna
- Moon Consulting
- Fitzgerald HR

Following an appraisal of their responses to the ITT, it has been concluded that Fitzgerald HR submitted the most flexible response that took into account our needs and at a lower cost than the other four firms. It is proposed to contract with them for support.

- Establish an initial interview panel of six:
 - Chairman
 - Chair of F & R
 - Chair of HotSW Joint Committee or Local Authority Director whom is a member of HotSW Joint Committee
 - HE / FE Director
 - Member of the LEP management team
 - Existing Chief Executive

- Organise dates for first and second round interviews and advise directors of relevant dates

The key next steps following this board meeting will be to:

1. Prepare a job specification, candidate pack and a series of adverts. These will be tabled at the January board meeting for approval before the recruitment process commences. We will budget for a similar remuneration package as at present and this will be reflected in the candidate pack.
2. Discuss with partners whom will be the employer of the Chief Executive.

Chris Garcia

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