

# Agenda Item 74.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Confirmation of Permanent Appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Council on 14 December 2018
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Interim Chief Executive – Heather Thwaites

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To appoint a permanent Chief Executive to ensure that statutory duties of the Head of Paid Service are properly discharged.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Council is requested to ratify the decision of the Personnel Board held on 5 December 2018 and confirm the appointment of Susan Parsonage as Wokingham Borough Council's new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides background information on the preferred candidate.

## Background

Penna recruitment consultants were engaged to work with the Council, following the decision not to appoint earlier in the year.

Following an extensive search, Penna carried out initial interviews and psychometric testing. On 31 October, Penna presented their findings and recommendations to the Personnel Board. The Personnel Board agreed that 6 candidates be shortlisted.

On 5 December, all 6 candidates were put through a rigorous assessment programme, including panel interviews with Partners, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Employee panel and final Personnel Board presentations and interviews. References were also reviewed on the day.

The successful candidate, Susan Parsonage, had no objections from Executive and has received a conditional offer of employment, subject to normal pre-employment checks, and Council ratification.

## Analysis of Issues

By way of background, Susan Parsonage is currently Chief Executive, Lancaster City Council and has significant experience obtained in senior leadership roles within Local Government over the past 20 years. In her current role at Lancaster City, she leads 750 employees across a district with a population of 143,000, and a £100m gross general expenditure budget. She has experience of working in large authorities, her previous role was in Ealing as Director of Safer Communities and Housing, where she was a director for 8 years. Susan has experience of developing and driving district-wide strategic change and development programmes. Whilst at Lancaster City, she has led the redesign of the city centre's multi-million regeneration project, also worked with partners to bring the UK's 2<sup>nd</sup> Eden project to Morecambe Bay; and set the Council's new ambitious four-year plan. Collaboration and partnership working underpins her work.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	n/a	n/a

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Summary CV of Susan Parsonage

<b>Contact</b> Sarah Swindley	<b>Service</b> Business Services
<b>Telephone No</b> Tel: 0118 974 6076	<b>Email</b> sarah.swindley@wokingham.gov.uk

## SUSAN PARSONAGE - CV SUMMARY

### Career History

#### **Lancaster City Council, Chief Executive – 1st July 2016 to current**

Working closely with elected members; providing leadership, vision and strategic direction for a north west City Council with 143,000 residents ensuring the delivery of corporate priorities. Developing and challenging the executive management team, leading over 750 employees, ensuring a customer focussed organisation. Driving growth within a tight financial framework. Forging partnerships and collaborative working. Examples of key achievements:

- Worked in partnership with the Eden Project and other stakeholders to bring the UK's second Eden Project to Morecambe Bay – with the potential for millions of visitors and a multi-billion pound boost to the economy.
- Introduced a new budget focus: Changing from silo service cuts to 'invest to save' and income generation ideas. Introducing a commercial approach.
- With Councillors & stakeholders formulated a new ambitious 4 year plan for the district.
- Persuaded Cabinet to adopt growth potential opportunities and reversed financial cuts to fundamental areas e.g. street environment and economic growth. Introducing new partnerships to tackle issues e.g. with Vodafone in introducing CCTV.
- Switched to a strategic approach to Arts & Culture as part of place shaping: meaning investing in museums and festivals.
- Put communities at the heart of organisation and introduced a set of organisational values & behaviours.
- Agreed formal joint working arrangement with neighbouring councils to become a driving economic force as part of the Northern Powerhouse
- Led major redevelopment opportunities e.g. City centre Canal Quarter site and strategic approach to Heysham Port.
- Personally visible, both while promoting Lancaster regionally and nationally across multiple digital media channels, and also to staff with increased engagement and staff recognition events.

#### **LB of Ealing, Director of Safer Communities & Housing (Jan 2008 – June 2016)**

Set direction and delivered political priorities in one of the most diverse boroughs in the country, with more than 330,000 residents. Led Service Heads, 500 staff, overseeing significant revenue & capital budgets. Leading across: Housing, Homelessness; Environmental Health, Planning Enforcement. Regulating food businesses; licensed premises and private rented sector. Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Key achievements included:

- Successfully facilitated the Safer Ealing Partnership (SEP), unifying partners in setting crime reduction strategy. Resulting in substantial crime reductions year-on-year.
- Other crime reduction work included: introducing, with Police Chief Superintendent, an integrated enforcement model, merging council and police teams, reducing crime and increasing enforcement; piloting a multi-disciplinary approach on an estate with high crime levels and ASB, resulting in reductions in various crime types and ASB.
- Leading partnership approach to tackling violence against women and girls and child sexual exploitation.
- Part of Cabinet Office 'Illegal working and migrant exploitation' project. One of 6 pilots in the country, improving cross-organisational approaches to business multiple rule breakers.

- Introduced new operating model for Environmental Health & Trading Standards, focussing on problem solving and improved outcomes. Substantially increasing outputs such as warrant applications, housing act notices, fines and custodial sentences.
- Delivered annual savings over five years while increasing income and improving services at the same time.

Whilst at Ealing:

Board Chair, Hyelm Housing Association for 3yrs & Board Member, Catalyst Housing

### **LB of Ealing, 2000 to 2008**

#### **-Head of Envirocrime Prevention**

Remodelled envirocrime prevention service, leading managers and contractors with key achievements included significantly increasing enforcement and improved performance and outcomes on front line services e.g. street cleansing, graffiti removal and flyposting. Increasing the number of prosecutions and delivering a community award winning streetwatcher scheme, with over 400 volunteers.

#### **-Environmental Services, Head of Business Development & Change Champion,**

Oversaw the business redesign of: recycling, street cleansing and refuse collection processes to improve effectiveness and make savings. Whilst undertaking restructuring and moving staff to new structures.

#### **-Community Safety Manager**

Managing a partnership team, action to tackle and prevent crime. Led on the 2001 crime audit, strategy and implementation. Reviewed partnership performance.

### **Chester City Council, Policy Officer & Campaign Co-ordinator, 1998 to 2000**

Delivered campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and children. (Home Office good practice) Led on community safety.

### **University of Wales, Law Researcher & Tutor, 1994 to 1998**

Achieved Masters on housing policy, taught legal subjects. Also trustee for Aberystwyth Women's Aid.

### **1983 to 1991 - BT**

#### **Academic qualifications**

- Master of Philosophy, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1996
- Law degree LLB (Hons), University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1994

This page is intentionally left blank