

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	29 July 2022
Title of Report:	Authorisation to recruit Service Director for Finance, Section 151 officer
Lead Member:	Councillor Shayer (Deputy Leader)
Lead Strategic Director:	Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services)
Author:	Andy Ralphs, Strategic Director for Customer and Corporate Services
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on proposals for the recruitment to a post on the Council's Management Team and seeks approval to commence the process.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Approve the commencement of activity, including the procurement of an executive search agency, for the recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Finance.
2. Note the draft timetable.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Service Director for Finance is the Council's Section 151 Officer which ensures the statutory financial duties, responsibilities and accountabilities for the Council and Executive are discharged. The Council is required, in law, to have an officer appointed with responsibility for the council's finances.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction of the Council for the next four years and recommendations within this report align to this.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The post is a permanent role with established budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

It is the responsibility of all senior officers to ensure we develop and deliver our plans for both ensuring the Council is carbon neutral by 2030 and leading the City in carbon reduction. Digital will be a significant contributor to enable the Council and City to work, connect and behave differently in the future. In respect of the recruitment process, steps will be taken to ensure that where meetings can be undertaken virtually this is done to reduce travelling time, costs and associated carbon implications.

The minimum of printing and paper will be used with use of email, virtual and other media being used where possible.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

The Service Director for Finance holds statutory responsibility as the Council's Section 151 Officer. It is key to delivering priorities in relation to service delivery and ensuring the Council's statutory financial duties, responsibilities and accountabilities are discharged. Any recruitment and selection processes will be undertaken with reference to the Council's established procedures and relevant legislation.

Appendices

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Role Profile							

Background papers:

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Andy Ralphs											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 21/07/2022											

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Shayer approved by email

Date approved: 21/07/2022

I. INTRODUCTION

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993 and The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 prescribe a number of actions when recruitment to a Chief Officer post is required.

The definition of 'Chief Officer' for the purposes of these regulations refers to:

- the Head of Paid Service,
- the Monitoring Officer,
- the Section 151 Officer,
- a statutory Chief Officer (as defined by section 2(6) of the 1989 Act),
- non-statutory Chief Officers as defined by section 2(7) of the 1989 Act (which essentially include officers who report directly to the head of paid service): regulation 1(2) of the 1993 Regulations.
- a Deputy Chief Officer (those reporting to a Chief Officer)

There are a number of defined activities that must be undertaken in any recruitment, including:

- The creation of a document clearly stating the duties of the officer, what qualifications, experience and skills they will need to undertake the role (the role profile).
- Making arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it.
- Providing a copy of the role profile to any person requesting this.

Once advertised as above, authorities will either interview all those who are qualified to undertake the role or select a short list of qualified applicants. If there are no qualified applicants, the local authority will then make further arrangements.

The 2001 Regulations require, in the case of the Section 151 Officer, that appointment be done by full Council, however it may be on recommendation from a committee of Council.

2. CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Council has delegated the function of interviewing, recommending a candidate for appointment of the Section 151 Officer and agreeing the terms of that offer of appointment to the Chief Officer Appointments panel (COAP). COAP must then make a recommendation of appointment to full Council for any appointment of the Section 151 Officer.

3. BACKGROUND

The current Section 151 Officer (Service Director for Finance) was appointed to this role following a recruitment process undertaken by the Appointments Panel on 5 October 2020. He has recently announced his intention to leave and this is likely to take effect from 3 October 2022. The Section 151 Officer ensures that statutory financial duties, responsibilities and accountabilities for the Council and Executive are discharged and their responsibilities are detailed within the role profile attached at Appendix A.

4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT TO POST

The recruitment process is likely to last a minimum of three months and will need to be closely managed to ensure a good candidate experience. Before the recruitment process commences a review of the content of the role profile will take place to ensure it is still current.

Members will be supported in the recruitment process by the HROD department. The Council's current recruitment and selection policy and guidance notes provide reference to ensure that recruitment processes and activities are fair and equitable.

If agreed by COAP, an executive search agency will be appointed. The involvement of COAP is shown in the timetable. Refreshed training in recruitment and selection will be offered to new panel members ahead of any recruitment activity commencing.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Service Director for Finance role is within Salary Band 4 of the chief officer pay and grading structure. This band is currently £78,219 to £109,505 per annum. The current post holder receives a salary of £106,575 per annum.

Chief officer pay is linked to national pay bargaining and no increase has as yet been announced for the financial year 2022/2023.

This senior role is likely to require assistance from an external executive search company with potential costs in the region of £22,000 to £25,000. These costs cover items including search and attraction of candidates, advertising, initial candidate sifting, services of a technical adviser and psychometric testing.

6. INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Based on the draft timetable below and the likelihood that a successful candidate will be required to give three months' notice (subject to negotiation with their employer), they may not be available to start employment with Plymouth City Council until January/February 2023.

Stage	Proposed date
Procurement process for executive search and selection agency	w/c 1 & 8 August
Mapping and soft market testing commences Preparation of microsite and documents	w/c 15 August
Role advertised, search commences	w/c 5 September
Advert and search closes	26 September
Longlist prepared by agency	27 September
Agency and PCC officers undertake technical interviews	w/c 3 October
Shortlisting	w/c 3 October
Assessment day	w/c 10 October

COAP – Member Panel	21 October
Decision by Full Council to confirm appointment	EGM tbc (7 days' notice required)

7. INTERIM APPOINTMENT

As this role holds statutory responsibilities, as outlined above and contained within the role profile, it is proposed to seek an interim Service Director for Finance internally in the first instance. It is anticipated, due to the qualification requirements of the post holder, there are only two possible candidates and there may or may not be interest from them. As such discussions will take place to see what level of interest there is in an interim position before a course of action is decided and timetable set.

A verbal update will be provided to Committee.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Approve the commencement of activity, including the procurement of an executive search agency, for the recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Finance.
2. Note the draft timetable.