

## Chief Officer Appointments Panel

Friday 2 June 2023

### PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, in the Chair.  
Councillors Blight, Laing, Luggier, Patel, Stephens and Stoneman.

Also in attendance: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Kim Brown (Service Director for HROD), Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 3.05 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

### 73. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 74. **Minutes**

The minutes from 14 April 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### 75. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### 76. **Recruitment to Director of Resources**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) presented the report to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Four candidates had been sourced by the executive search agency, three of those candidates were put forward to the assessment centre, and two of those candidates withdrew. One due to being close to retirement and the other because they did not wish to progress. The final candidate went through to the assessment centre but the candidate did not have the breadth of n experience required or depth of knowledge to progress to the Panel for interview;
- b) The current interim Service Director of Finance, David Northey had agreed to stay in the role until March 2024. The Panel thanked David Northey in agreeing to an extension, subject to City Council approval;
- c) It was recognised that the market was difficult and further discussions will take place with the Executive recruiters to ascertain would take place to

ensure correct timing in advertising the role;

- d) The current structure has the role of Director of Resources, with the intention of deleting the Service Director of Finance role however this role is occupied on an interim basis by David Northey. Agreement from the Panel would be to seek a dispensation to keep the position of Service Director for Finance until March 2024
- e) The post holder for Service Director for Finance would remain the Section 151 Officer. The deputy position had a vacancy and the restructure for Finance would be brought forward to ensure that the deputy position was filled. The Head of Finance would be reporting to the Director of Resources;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) The role of Director of Resources had not been unique and the salary had not been an issue with recruitment, but it was acknowledged that due to the fast paced market, timing was the issue;
- b) There would be no additional costs as a result of no candidates being interviewed at the meeting and the Council would go out to the market again to source candidates for the role;
- c) The Council were getting value for money by using the executive search agency to obtain qualified, experienced and credible candidates and ; using a well-known agency in the market;
- d) The Corporate Management team would be sharing the additional responsibilities of the Director of Resources role to allow David Northey to focus on Finance responsibilities. The organisation was carrying a number of vacancies due to budgeted positions and are pending Director of Resources recruitment in order for the post holder to arrange the structure as required by them. The Council would be bringing forward proposals to fill the Director of Digital and Customer Services role due to its importance in the organisation.

The Panel unanimously agreed to:

- 1. Extend the current post holder David Northey in the current position of Service Director for Finance until March 2024, subject to City Council approval;
- 2. To continue the recruitment process for a permanent Director of Resources;

77. **Recruitment to Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) presented this item to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The recruitment to the permanent position of Human Resources and Organisational Development had been on-going and it was agreed previously by the Panel to search for an interim candidate as there would be a gap between the current post holder leaving and a new candidate joining the Council;
- b) The search had sourced two candidates for the interim role, interviews would take place in part II of the meeting;
- c) Should a candidate be successful, the contract period would be 3-6 months which would correlate with start date of the permanent Service Director for HROD.

The Panel unanimously agreed to:

1. Note progress on the recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development.
2. Undertake a recruitment process for the post of Interim Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development.

78. **Service Director for Education Participation and Skills**

Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) presented the item to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Panel previously went to the market for a permanent Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills but had been unsuccessful in appointing a suitable candidate;
- b) The current interim post holder for Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills, Annie Gammon was very experienced and had agreed to extend the contract until the end of December 2023 subject to the Panel approval;
- c) It was recognised that Annie Gammon would not seek an extension of the contract past 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 and would retire. Annie Gammon's contract was due to expire in summer 2023 and had already planned an extended period of leave. Annie had agreed to work one day a week during this period, in which time Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) and other Heads of Service would step into the role and responsibilities;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- a) The interim market had a number of experienced chief officers and they had chosen not to apply permanently as there would be flexibility in their lifestyles to finish assignments and could choose when to take on another role. These Chief Officers would be experienced and could hit the ground running;

- b) It was recognised that for a good interim candidate, salary pay would be more, but the Council would be paying for experience, for the candidate to be available immediately and able to take on the role and deliver quickly;
- c) It was acknowledged that the permanent market was not buoyant and Local Authorities required to seek candidates from the interim market. Having a number of interim post holders at senior management level had increased pressure on existing permanent staff as interims would not be part of the broader elements of being part of a senior such as providing tactical cover
- d) The Panel thanked the current post holder Annie Gammon for continuing to stay in the post until 31 December 2023.

Panel agreed unanimously to:

- 1. the extension of the current interim post holder for a period of up to six months

79. **Service Director for Children Young People and Families**

Sharon Muldoon (Director of Children's Services) presented this item to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Jane Anstis (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) was appointed by the Council in November 2022 but had decided to resign for personal reasons, Jane had been with Plymouth City Council for three years and was a Head of Service before stepping up;
- b) The Council would be seeking an interim candidate for 12 months and not to the permanent position due to the Council receiving an improvement notice from the Department for Education and the requirement for the improvement work to be fast paced and unrelenting with short timescales.

The Panel agreed unanimously to:

- 1. Note the action taken so far to source interim candidates for the role of Service Director for Children, Young People and Families and approve interim recruitment to this post;
- 2. If suitable candidates have been identified, to interview these on 2 June 2023.

80. **Recruitment to Head of Legal Services**

Kim Brown (Service Director for HROD) presented this item to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer tendered her resignation and there was a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to have a Monitoring Officer in place;
- b) The Council would be seeking to recruit to the permanent position and in the interim look to appoint Deputy Monitoring Officer Alison Critchfield who had agreed to the role as the interim;
- c) The Council would not be without a Monitoring Officer whilst the changes occurred subject to the Panel's approval.

The Panel agreed to:

1. Note the interim arrangements for the post of Head of Legal Services;
2. Approve permanent recruitment to commence, including the procurement of an executive search agency;
3. Recommend to council the designation of the Acting Head of Legal Services as the Monitoring Officer in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 from the last day of service of the current post holder. This will be for a period of approximately 6 months or until a permanent Head of Legal Services is recruited.

81. **Exempt Business**

The Panel agreed to pass a resolution under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

82. **Confidential Minutes**

The confidential minutes from 14 April 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

83. **Recruitment to Director of Resources**

This item was considered in part I of the meeting.

84. **Recruitment to Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development**

Two candidates were selected for interview from the recruitment process with one candidate removing themselves from the interview process. Following an interview with one candidate, the Panel agreed not to appoint the candidate to the post of interim Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The Council would seek further candidates for the Panel's approval.

85. **Recruitment to Service Director for Children, Young People and Families**

Following an interview with the candidate, the Panel agreed unanimously to the appointment of Nigel Denning to the role of Interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families for 12 months, subject to Cabinet agreement and the necessary pre-employment checks.

86. **Recruitment to Head of Legal Services**

This item was considered under part I of the meeting.

87. **Update to Chief Officers' Terms and Conditions**

This item was considered in part II of the meeting.