

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	24 July 2023
Title of Report:	Recruitment to Director of Children's Services
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Di Saunders-Brewer (HR Culture Partner)
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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 the recruitment of both the permanent Director of Children's Services and the proposed temporary arrangements.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note progress on the recruitment of a permanent Director of Children's Services.
2. Undertake a recruitment process for the post of Interim Director of Children's Services.

Alternative options considered and rejected

This is a key post on the Council's Management Team with responsibility for a number of statutory activities around the protection of some of the City's most vulnerable people and which is best served by a dedicated permanent appointment. Interim arrangements are required while the permanent recruitment and selection process is completed.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction of the Council 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. Further information relating to financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

Financial Risks

Full cost of any proposal will be available to Members ahead of any commitment of resources. There will be appropriate scrutiny by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

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 use of printing and paper will be encouraged.

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

This is a key role in the minimisation of risk and active prevention of harm to children and their families. It has oversight of both the Children's Social Care and Education, Participation and Skills departments with a focus on working with children, young people and their families to enhance their life and education prospects. 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) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Role Profile Director Children's Services							

Background papers:

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

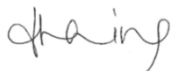
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee

Please confirm the Chief Executive has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 14/07/2023

Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Jemima Laing



Date approved: 14/07/2023

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.

2. CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS PANEL DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Council has delegated the function of interviewing candidates to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel (COAP). COAP acts with the delegated authority of the Council to appoint to Chief Officer roles where the law prohibits the Head of Paid Service from making the appointment but allows full Council to delegate the responsibility.

3. BACKGROUND

The current Director of Children's Services was appointed to this role following a recruitment process undertaken by the Appointments Panel in 2022. She recently tendered her resignation and leaves the Council in September.

The Director of Children's Services has a number of statutory responsibilities including those conferred by:

- Section 18(2) of the Children Act 2004
- Social services functions within the meaning of the Local Authorities Social Services Act 1970, insofar as they relate to children, and the Council's functions for children and young people leaving care
- Any health related functions exercised by the Council on behalf of an NHS body under section 31 of the Health Act 1999, insofar as they relate to children.

The role is also the Council's Chief Education Officer. The role profile is attached at Appendix A.

4. RECRUITMENT TO POSTS

A verbal update was provided to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 13 June 2023 and approval was given for permanent and interim recruitment to commence.

Since that date, an initial search for an interim appointment has been prioritised, with suitable candidates sought via the Council's preferred supplier, Matrix. A number of candidate CVs have been reviewed. A smaller number of candidates have been screened by the Chief Executive and 2 external advisors. Members will be invited to interview a suitable interim candidate on 24 July 2023. A full recruitment pack will be provided.

The permanent recruitment process has started with final interviews at COAP in the Autumn. The recruitment process will be closely managed to ensure a good candidate experience.

Members will be supported in the recruitment process by the HROD department, and the Council's recruitment and selection policy and guidance notes will be followed to ensure fairness and equity. Refreshed training in recruitment and selection will be offered to new panel members ahead of any recruitment activity commencing.

Based on 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 2024.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Director of Children's Services role is within Band 2 of the Chief Officer pay and grading structure £136,920 to £163,904 per annum for 2023/24.

An external executive search company is leading on the recruitment and selection campaign and the total cost incurred will be 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.

The Service Director HROD will provide further detail on interim pay rates if an appointment is recommended.

Cabinet approval will be required if Members recommend an appointment.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note progress on the recruitment of a permanent Director of Children's Services.
2. Undertake a recruitment process for the post of Interim Director of Children's Services.