

Chief Officer Appointments Panel

Friday 28 July 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor Laing, in the Chair.

Councillors Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Blight, Dann, Darcy and Luggar.

Also in attendance: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Pamela Moffatt (Interim Service Director for HROD) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.39 am.

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.

104. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tudor Evans OBE and Councillor Dann substituted.

The Panel unanimously voted Councillor Laing in to Chair the meeting.

105. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

106. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

107. **Senior Management Recruitment**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) provided an update to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) An interim Director of Children's Services was appointed and would start on Monday 31 July 2023. Sharon Muldoon would remain as the Statutory Director of Children's Services until an agreed transfer of the role between the two was agreed by Tracey Lee. This would allow a good quality and timely handover which would also provide stability for the service;
- b) Recruitment to the Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) continued;
- c) The Council had secured the services of Annie Gammon (Interim Service Director of Education, Participation and Skills) until 25 December 2023 and recruitment to the permanent post would continue;

- d) The Council had gone into the market for a permanent Service Director for HROD, but it was agreed to continue the search in order to yield stronger candidates;
- e) The Head of Legal services (Monitoring Officer) recruitment had continued and the advert for the role was live;

Pamela Moffatt (Interim Service Director for HROD) provided an update to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- f) Work was being undertaken to understand the root cause of candidates not coming to Plymouth and then the Council not able to retain those staff;
- g) The Council needed to make the executive search agencies work harder and produce a field of candidates from across the UK;
- h) Recruitment to the Director of Resources was done at the incorrect time due to accountants producing their end of year accounts;
- i) The Head of Communications at Plymouth City Council would be creating a campaign for future recruitment. The Director of Resources and Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills adverts would go live at the same time on the same microsite;
- j) The recruitment process for a permanent Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills continued and the executive search agency had started informal network conversations with potential candidates;
- k) Recruitment to the permanent Service Director for HROD had continued. A pool of candidates was sourced, however after longlisting it was agreed to go back to search for candidates, in order to yield a stronger pool of candidates for the Panel;
- l) Alison Critchfield would continue to be the Interim Head of Legal services and Monitoring Officer until a permanent candidate had been found;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- m) Plymouth City Council would look to grow its own talent in future years and conversations were beginning in relation to succession planning between Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) and the Corporate Management Team;
- n) The Council did and continued to undertake exit interviews for Chief Officers. Three Chief Officers had left the Council for personal circumstances, a fourth wanted to be closer to home due to having a young family and another was made redundant in order to meet budget savings proposals. None had voiced that Plymouth City Council was a bad place to work and prior to COVID, the Council had a stable Corporate Management Team;

- o) It was acknowledged that previous Chief Officers didn't fully commit to Plymouth by moving and this was evidenced in the number of Chief Officers leaving their roles. The Council had to work to investigate why this was happening and what the solutions could be.

The Panel agreed to:

1. Note the update on the recruitment of the Director of Resources (S151 Officer);
2. Note the update on the recruitment of the permanent Service Director for Education;
3. Note progress on the recruitment of the permanent Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development;
4. Note progress on the recruitment of the permanent Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer).

108. **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.

109. **Senior Management Recruitment**

This item was considered under part I of the agenda.

110. **Interim Arrangements for People Directorate**

Tracey Lee (Chief Executive) provided an update to the Panel.

The Panel agreed to:

1. Approve the interim arrangements for the post of Strategic Director of People.

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