

# Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	07 November 2023
Title of Report:	<b>Recruitment to Head of Legal Services</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Annie Walker – HR Culture Partner
Contact Email:	Annie.walker@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## **Purpose of Report**

This report provides an update on the permanent recruitment to the role of Head of Legal Services which holds the designation of Monitoring Officer.

The Monitoring Officer is a Chief Officer role for the purposes of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993.

## **Recommendations and Reasons**

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Agree to undertake a recruitment process for the post of the role of Head of Legal Services.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

The recommendation put forward is in line with the Council's established practices and is offered as the best option in these particular circumstances. The Monitoring Officer is a statutory chief officer role and it is therefore essential that it is filled on a permanent basis.

## **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:**

Chief Officer roles are permanent positions with established budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan, and costs arising from this report can be contained within budget.

## **Financial Risks**

Full costs of any proposal will be available to Members ahead of any commitment of resources.

**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. There will be minimum use of printing and paper as emails, virtual meetings and other media will be utilised where possible.

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

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council’s duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The Monitoring Officer) holds statutory responsibility and is key to delivering priorities in relation to service delivery and ensuring the Council’s statutory 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**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

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	Briefing report title							

**Background papers:**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

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: Giles Perritt
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 27/10/2023
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing - approved via email. Date approved: 27/10/2023

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993 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) and
- 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, 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 previous Head of Legal Services left employment with Plymouth City Council 6 August 2023. To ensure adequate cover for this key senior role pending permanent recruitment Members agreed to appoint an internal interim replacement on 2 June 2023 for a period of six months or until a permanent Head of Legal Services was recruited.

**4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE.**

An executive search partner was engaged via the Council's preferred supplier Matrix and two potential candidates have now been identified and will be going through an assessment process on 3 November 2023, with a view to inviting the successful candidates to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel scheduled for 7 November 2023.

If Members recommend an appointment the approval of Cabinet and Council will need to be sought.

A supplementary pack, containing CVs and supporting statements will be forwarded to the Panel as soon as the outcome of the initial assessment process has concluded.