

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	14 November 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:	Annie Walker (HR Culture Partner)
Contact Email:	Annie.walker@plymouth.gov.uk
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.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Undertake a recruitment process for the post of the role of 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.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

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Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

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

Financial Risks

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.

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:

* 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.

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

*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							

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: Tracey Lee

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 03/11/2023

Cabinet Member approval: *[electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by email/verbally')]* Cllr Laing has approved

Date approved: 03/11/2023

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 Director of Children's Services left the Council's employment in September 2023.

To ensure adequate cover for this key senior role pending permanent recruitment Members interviewed and appointed an interim replacement on 24 July 2023 for a period of up to 12 months.

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.

4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE.

An executive search partner has been engaged via the Council's preferred supplier Matrix. Three potential candidates have now been identified and are going through an assessment process during w/c 30 October 2023 and w/c 6 November 2023 with a view to inviting the successful candidates to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel scheduled for 14 November 2023.

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.