

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	02 August 2024
Title of Report:	Recruitment to the role of Chief Operating Officer
Lead Members:	Councillors Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure, HR & OD) and Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries and Crematoria)
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Chris Squire (Service Director HR & Organisational Development)
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report highlights the requirement for Members to undertake formal interviews for the post of Chief Operating Officer.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

- Note the content of this report.
- Undertake formal interviews for the role of Chief Operating Officer

Alternative options considered and rejected.

This recommendation put forward is in line with the Council's established practices and is offered as the best option in these circumstances. This is a key post on the Council's Management Team with responsibility for a number of critical activities relating to the effectiveness of the organisation.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction of the Council. Recommendations within this report align to the current Plymouth City Council Corporate Plan.

Implications for the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Chief Operating Officer 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 to enable the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 and leading the City in carbon reduction.

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

The post would be the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner, as well as the strategic lead for Health & Safety. Any recruitment and selection processes will be undertaken with reference to Plymouth City 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

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:

Fin	DJN. 24.25. 049	Leg	LS/00 0033 91/6/ LB/22 /07/2 4	Mon Off	N/A	HR	CS.24 .25.01 3	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee, Chief Executive (David Haley in Tracey Lee's absence)											
Date agreed: 25/07/2024											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report: Yes.											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) approved via email.											
Date approved: 25/07/2024											

1. 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 Chief Operating Officer will be a key role within the Corporate Management Team of the Council, leading a range of support functions that are critical to the health and effectiveness of the organisation.

At the Chief Officer Appointments Panel held 22 March 2024, it was agreed to retitle the role from Strategic Director for Resources (Section 151) to Chief Operating Officer. As a result, the role no longer has the designation of the section 151 officer role and no longer requires the postholder to be a qualified accountant. Instead, the Service Director for Finance will retain the s151 designation and report to the COO, with a strategic financial reporting line to the Chief Executive. The council is recruiting to a Head of Finance post, in order to increase senior capacity and capability within the Finance Service and with the aim of providing succession for the existing Service Director of Finance when he retires.

4. RECRUITMENT TO POSTS

Following approval by the Chief Officer Appointments Panel in March 2024, an executive search partner was engaged, with a number of candidates subsequently being presented for consideration. Three candidates were invited to an assessment centre on Monday 8 July 2024 and all will be invited to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel scheduled for 2 August 2024.

A supplementary pack, containing CVs and supporting statements will be forwarded to the Panel prior to that Chief Officers Appointment Panel.

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The permanent role is currently a Band 2 Chief Officer within the chief officer pay and grading structure and the salary is currently within the range of £136,920 - £163,904. Chief Officer pay is linked to national pay bargaining and no increase has as yet been announced for the financial year 2024/25.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Undertake formal interviews for the role of Chief Operating Officer