

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	20 September 2024
Title of Report:	Recruitment to the role of Service Director for Finance
Lead Member:	Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Chris Squire (Service Director HR-OD)
Contact Email:	Tracey.lee@plymouth.gov.uk
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 Service Director for Finance.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel

1. Notes the content of this report.
2. Undertakes formal interviews for the role of Service Director for Finance.

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. There has been a campaign to recruit to a Head of Finance post, with potential progression to the Service Director position, in anticipation of the retirement of the current Service Director in March 2025, however this has not been successful.

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, specifically the provision of quality public services, trusting & engaging our communities, spending money wisely, empowering and engaging our staff and being a strong voice for Plymouth.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Service Director for Finance is a permanent role with established budget contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Subject to approval by Full Council, the role will also cover the statutory section 151 function.

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.

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 post would be the Council's section 151 officer, subject to approval by Full Council. All recruitment and selection processes will be undertaken with reference to Plymouth City 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: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)											

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? David Haley (Director of Children's Services) approved on behalf of Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)

Date agreed: 11 September 2024

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Lowry approved by email.

Date approved: 11 September 2024

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

As highlighted in the report of 24 May 2024, the Service Director for Finance is a key role within the Corporate Management Team of the Council and includes the statutory section 151 function, subject to approval by a meeting of the Full Council.

The Service Director for Finance will report to the Chief Operating Officer (once this role is filled), with a strategic financial reporting line to the Chief Executive. The council has been recruiting to a Head of Finance post, to increase senior capacity and capability within the Finance Service, with the aim of providing succession for the existing Service Director of Finance when he retires. However, this has not been successful and given how critical the service director function is, it was agreed by the Chief Officer Appointments Panel that the role be advertised.

4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE.

An executive search partner was engaged, with a number of candidates subsequently being presented for consideration. Two candidates were invited to an assessment centre on Friday 6 September 2024 and a decision will be made as to which candidates to invite to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel scheduled for 20 September 2024.

If Members recommend an appointment the approval of Cabinet and Council will need to be sought in order to approve the designation of the statutory Section 151 function to the role.

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

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The role is a Band 4 Chief Officer within the chief officer pay and grading structure and following the 2024/25 national pay award, the salary is within the range of £85,023 - £118,213.

Benchmarking has been undertaken to ensure advice is available about current market rates for this role ahead of any appointment to the permanent role.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Undertake formal interviews for the role of Service Director for Finance.