

Chief Officer Appointments Panel

Date of meeting:	13 December 2024
Title of Report:	Recruitment to Interim Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills (EPS)
Lead Members:	Cllr Sally Cresswell
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Chris Squire (Service Director HR & Organisational Development)
Contact Email:	Tracey.Lee@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report highlights the request for Members to undertake a formal interview for the post of Interim Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills (EPS).

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Agree to undertake a recruitment process for the post of Service Director for EPS, in order to appoint to the post on a permanent basis.
3. Undertakes a formal interview for the post of Interim Service Director - EPS.

Alternative options considered and rejected.

This recommendation put forward is in line with the Chief Officer Appointment Panel's approval to recruit an interim postholder, pending permanent recruitment to the role. Other options considered were to leave the post vacant or to request that someone from the Children's Services Directorate acts-up into the post, pending permanent recruitment. However, the Service Director for EPS is a key role within the Children's Services management team, and continuity of leadership and experience in this role is required during this period. It is therefore recommended that an interim appointment be made.

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 Service Director for EPS 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:

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:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley – Director of Children’s Services											
Date agreed: 06/12/2024											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report.											
Date agreed 06/12/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: Leader – Councillor Sally Cresswell											
Date approved by email: 05 December 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 suitable and qualified applicants. If there are no suitable 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 confirmed at the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 15 November 2024, the current Service Director EPS has resigned and is due to leave the Council on 16th January 2025.

This is a key role, reporting to the Director of Children's Services, with responsibility for driving up education standards, providing access to learning and supporting learning needs. It is responsible for developing and maintaining strong relationships with educational providers in the City including Higher Education, Further Education, Schools and Early Years settings. The role will lead the implementation of the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan and establish new ways of service delivery in an integrated multi-disciplinary locality model. In common with the Service Director for CYPF the role has a strong focus as a champion for vulnerable children, including access to and provision of Early Help across the Local Authority and wider partnership system.

4. INTERIM RECRUITMENT UPDATE

At the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 15 November 2024, approval was given for the Director of Children's Services to consider the following options to replace the Service Director for EPS, including:

- Asking an existing employee to act-up into the post.
- Progressing the recruitment of an interim service director.

While the preferred option was to ask that an existing employee act-up into the post, it has not been possible to progress the discussions to a favourable outcome. Consequently, contact was made with an appropriate executive search agency, and candidates have been identified as having the requisite skills, knowledge and experience for the role.

Candidates has therefore been invited to an interview with the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 13 December 2024.

If successful, it is proposed that interim be engaged initially for 6 months, but with the option to extend to 9 months pending the permanent appointment to the role.

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

5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Interim Appointment

This type of post is very much in-demand and there is a shortage of high-quality candidates. Market rates for these roles fall within a range of £800 - £1,000/day (inclusive of charges).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the contents of this report.
2. Agree to undertake a recruitment process for the post of Service Director for EPS, in order to appoint to the post on a permanent basis.
3. Undertake a formal interview for the role of Interim Service Director for EPS.