

# Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	21 March 2025
Title of Report:	<b>Recruitment to role of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD)
Lead Strategic Director:	Jens Gemmel (Interim Chief Operating Officer)
Author:	Chris Squire (Service Director HROD)
Contact Email:	Jens.gemmel@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on proposals for the recruitment to the new post of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital within the Council's senior management team and seeks approval to commence the process.

## Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel

1. Note the updated role profile for the Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital;
2. Approve the independent job evaluation of the role, procurement of an executive search agency, and preparation of recruitment materials for the recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital;
3. Approve commencement of the recruitment process for the post, dependent on the evaluation of the role.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options considered were to either leave this role vacant or to fill on an interim basis.

However, it is essential that the Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital is filled on a permanent basis, to enable the postholder to lead the organisation in delivering effective customer services through a prevention-first and digital-first approach. This dual focus ensures proactive, data-driven solutions are embedded across the Council, enabling early interventions that reduce service demand and deliver lasting value

The recommendation is in line with the Council's established practices and is offered as the best option in these particular circumstances. It is essential that the role is filled permanently as soon as possible to deliver these key responsibilities for the Local Authority and to support the delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Plan

**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:**

This role is a permanent position with established budget contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan, and costs arising from this report can be contained within budget.

**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.*

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	Role Profile							

**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: Jens Gemmel (Interim Chief Operating Officer)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 11/03/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Dann approved by email Date approved: 11/03/2025											

## **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 consider alternative 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 role of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital has been held vacant on the senior management structure, pending permanent recruitment to the Chief Operating Officer role (which is ongoing). However, in light of our ambitious public sector reform agenda, it is essential that the role of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital is filled on a permanent basis. This will support the Council's drive for a 'Prevention-First' approach through the delivery of digital and data-driven approaches, enabling early intervention in addressing challenges that the City faces.

## **4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE.**

While the role of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital is an existing role on the senior management structure, the role profile has been reviewed and updated and this is attached at Appendix A.

Because the changes are significant, it is necessary for it to be re-evaluated. It is anticipated that the role will be evaluated within Chief Officer Band 4 £85,023 to £118,213. Should the role be evaluated at anything other than Chief Officer Band 4, a further report will be provided to COAP and no further

## OFFICIAL

recruitment activity will be undertaken, until all necessary approvals are in place.

On that basis, approval is now sought from Members of COAP to commence the work activities required in advance of launching the recruitment process to secure a permanent post holder. This will include:

- Submitting the role profile for independent job evaluation by Korn Ferry to determine the salary band
- Engaging an external executive search partner
- Preparation of recruitment materials.

We anticipate that suitably qualified and experienced candidates for this role are likely to be employed in similar senior roles requiring a three-month notice period, therefore it is important for the preparation required prior to advertising the role to commence as soon as possible. The interim Chief Operating Officer and Service Director Human Resources and Organisational Development will lead on the recruitment process with regular updates provided to Members.

### **5. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

It is anticipated that the role will be evaluated as Chief Officer Band 4 within the range of £85,023 to £118,213 per annum. Chief Officer pay is linked to national pay bargaining.

### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Approve the independent job evaluation of the role, procurement of an executive search agency, and preparation of recruitment materials for the recruitment of a permanent Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital;
3. Approve commencement of the recruitment process for the post, dependent on the evaluation of the role.

**SERVICE DIRECTOR**

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND DIGITAL



<b>Grade and Tier</b>	Chief Officer – Band 4	<b>Reference:</b>	COF0021
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chief Operating Officer	<b>Job Type:</b>	Strategic Leader

**Role Purpose**

The Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital will lead the organisation in delivering simple, inclusive, and trustworthy customer services through a prevention-first and digital-first approach. This dual focus ensures proactive, data-driven solutions are embedded across the Council, enabling early interventions that reduce service demand and deliver lasting value.

The postholder will implement a service design methodology to transform the Council into a user-led, insight-driven organisation, aligning digital innovation with preventative strategies to address root causes of demand. This requires leveraging AI, machine learning, and predictive analytics alongside integrated data systems to anticipate and meet customer needs, streamline operations, and support long-term resilience.

The role also holds strategic responsibility for managing Plymouth City Council's shared service contracts for IT and printing services, ensuring alignment with organisational goals, innovation, cyber security, and cost-effectiveness.

The role reports to the Chief Operating Officer and is part of the Customer & Corporate Services Directorate.

**Statutory and Key Responsibilities/Accountabilities**

Provision of statutory Libraries services (DCMS & Arts Council).

**Key Responsibilities****Corporate and organisational**

- **Customer Experience Strategy:** Own and lead the Council's customer experience strategy, embedding prevention-first and digital-first principles into every aspect of service delivery.
- **Service Redesign:** Develop and implement a redesign framework that integrates prevention-focused enablers, including predictive analytics, integrated systems, and cross-departmental collaboration, to simplify services, improve inclusivity, and build trust.
- **Building Organisational Capability:** Equip teams across the organisation with the skills, tools, and confidence needed to adopt customer-focused behaviours, leveraging test-and-learn approaches and cross-functional collaboration to drive change.
- **Customer-Centric Decision-Making:** Champion the voice of the customer by embedding data insights, predictive models, and real-time feedback into decision-making processes to prioritise early intervention and meet diverse needs.
- **AI and Machine Learning:** Harness AI and machine learning to enable proactive, user-focused service delivery, enhancing the ability to predict and address demand before it escalates.

- **Integrated Data Platforms:** Leverage deep data systems that connect insights across departments, such as social care, housing, and health, to identify vulnerabilities, improve targeting, and enable coordinated responses.
- **Cultural Transformation:** Promote a digitally literate, prevention-focused culture across the organisation, equipping staff to adopt and maximise the benefits of new technologies.
- **Shared Services Governance:** Strategically manage DELT shared service contracts to ensure alignment with organisational priorities, driving innovation while maintaining operational security and resilience.

### Performance and Finance

- **Prevention-Focused KPIs:** Define and monitor key performance indicators that reflect both prevention and digital goals, such as reductions in failure demand, increased early interventions, and cost savings through automation.
- **Value-Driven Transformation:** Ensure that digital initiatives and prevention strategies deliver measurable value for money, minimising costs while maximising community impact.
- **Optimising Resources:** Use predictive insights to allocate resources effectively, prioritising investments that deliver preventative outcomes and operational efficiencies.
- **DELT Contract Oversight:** Monitor the performance of the DELT shared service contract, ensuring it delivers cost-effective, high-quality, and innovative solutions.

### Customer and Communities

- **Inclusive, Preventative Service Design:** Champion services designed to be accessible, equitable, and proactive, addressing the root causes of demand and providing alternative options for those digitally excluded.
- **Proactive Use of Data:** Leverage predictive analytics and community insights to identify service gaps, anticipate demand, and deliver preventative measures that reduce dependency on crisis services.
- **Personalised Engagement:** Deploy AI tools to create tailored customer experiences, offering proactive notifications, personalised recommendations, and real-time support.
- **Reducing Failure Demand:** Drive improvements in service quality and responsiveness by using integrated data to address systemic issues and prevent avoidable escalations.

### Partnerships and external relationships

- **Collaboration for Prevention:** Partner with external organisations, including DELT, technology providers, and community stakeholders, to co-create prevention-first, digitally-enabled solutions.
- **Regional and National Engagement:** Represent the Council in forums to influence digital transformation and prevention strategies at a regional and national level.
- **Securing Investment:** Advocate for and secure funding to scale AI, data platforms, and prevention initiatives, ensuring sustainable delivery of innovative solutions.
- **Cross-Sector Alignment:** Work with public, private, and third-sector organisations to integrate digital and preventative priorities into community-wide strategies.

### Governance

- **Compliance and Ethics:** Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and ethical standards, including GDPR, accessibility, and equality legislation, while embedding frameworks for the ethical use of AI and data.

- **Risk and Resilience:** Establish robust risk management processes for digital and preventative initiatives, ensuring challenges are identified and mitigated proactively.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Provide clear, evidence-based updates on digital transformation and prevention-first outcomes to senior executives, elected officials, and stakeholders.
- **Performance Management:** Lead governance of the DELT shared service, ensuring strategic alignment and delivery against agreed performance targets.

Role Accountabilities	Role Outcomes
<p><b>Corporate and Organisational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead the Digital &amp; Customer Experience management team.</li> <li>▪ Accountable for the development and delivery of strategy and performance across all Digital &amp; Customer Experience departments, this includes ensuring that they align to the Council's Operating model.</li> <li>▪ Accountable for the delivery of the Council's Digital Plan and ensure it is kept relevant and up to date.</li> <li>▪ Accountable for leading and developing the Digital, Business Support, Libraries, and Transformation teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance and Finance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accountable for the delivery of the departmental budgets as aligned to the corporate plan.</li> <li>▪ Ensure there is an appropriate performance framework in place to manage service performance and delivery objectives within department.</li> <li>▪ Responsible for a range of services including those relating to Digital, Library Services, and Business Support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Customer and Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensures services within own department are focused on continuous improvement within agreed levels of customer satisfaction to best meet the needs of internal and external customers and citizens.</li> <li>▪ Ensure efficient processes and ease of use business focused support to customers.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate a culture change programme to support the organisation's transition to a customer focused culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnerships and External Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create and manage effective relationships and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, building support amongst them in order to deliver better public services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achieving measurable improvements in customer satisfaction through the integration of prevention-first and digital-first strategies.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrating reductions in failure demand and reactive service costs by implementing predictive analytics and AI-driven solutions.</li> <li>▪ Increasing adoption of self-service tools, ensuring accessibility and reducing operational inefficiencies.</li> <li>▪ Delivering targeted cost savings through prevention-focused initiatives and intelligent automation, with clear ROI on digital investments.</li> <li>▪ Meeting agreed performance outcomes for the DELT shared service, ensuring innovative, secure, and sustainable service delivery.</li> <li>▪ Strengthening community trust and confidence in the Council's ability to use data and technology responsibly to address needs.</li> <li>▪ Improving employee engagement and digital fluency, ensuring staff are equipped to support prevention and digital innovation agendas.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the city by supporting and participating in key corporate events.</li> <li>▪ Build a consistent approach to leadership styles across the organisation to derive an empowered leadership culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver the statutory functions as stated in the role profile.</li> <li>▪ Member of tactical command team for civil emergencies and business continuity in liaison with the police/other agencies as appropriate. Member of the out of hour's rota. Ensure the department is compliant with all statutory, regulatory, safeguarding and audit requirements, and where applicable, those of Ofsted, CQC, Health and Safety Executive and Information Security</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Essential Qualifications and Experience</b></p>	<p><b>Essential Attributes and Skills</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extensive senior leadership experience with a focus on customer experience, digital transformation, and prevention-first strategies.</li> <li>▪ Proven track record of implementing AI, machine learning, and predictive analytics to drive measurable improvements.</li> <li>▪ Strong background in managing complex shared service agreements and embedding preventative approaches into large-scale transformation.</li> <li>▪ Experience delivering improvements within a project/programme management environment, meeting targets on time and within budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Prevention-Focused Leadership:</b> Demonstrated ability to embed prevention-first strategies into organisational operations, leveraging technology and data to reduce demand.</li> <li>▪ <b>Data Integration Expertise:</b> Strong experience in creating and managing integrated data systems that support predictive insights and early intervention.</li> <li>▪ <b>AI and Machine Learning Knowledge:</b> Proven success in using AI and machine learning to enhance service delivery, personalise experiences, and enable preventative approaches.</li> <li>▪ <b>Collaborative Leadership:</b> Adept at fostering partnerships, aligning stakeholders, and driving a shared vision for prevention and digital transformation.</li> <li>▪ <b>Ethical Governance:</b> Expertise in implementing frameworks to ensure the ethical, transparent, and compliant use of AI and data.</li> </ul>