

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting: 15 August 2025

Title of Report: **Recruitment to Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital**

Lead Member: Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD)

Lead Strategic Director: Tracey Lee – Chief Executive

Author: Audrey Freeman (HR Culture Partner)

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Your Reference:

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report highlights the request for Members to undertake formal interviews for the post of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Undertakes formal interviews for the post of Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital.

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 advisable 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/ experience and accelerate our approach to digital and AI. 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:

The Service Director for Customer Experience and Digital 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.

Financial Risks

There are no financial risks arising as this appointment falls within existing budget.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this 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> | | | | | | |
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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> | | | | | | |
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Sign off:

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| Fin | ITG.2 5.26. 050 | Leg | LS/00 00339 1/14/L B/04/ 08/25 | Mon Off | N/A | HR | AM2508 05 | Asset s | N/A | Strat Proc | N/A |
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee – Chief Executive

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report.

Date agreed : 04th August 2025

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD

Date approved by email: 6 August 2025

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 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 highlighted in the report of 21 March 2025, 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.

The role has been through independent evaluation and has been confirmed as Chief Officer Band 4.

4. PERMANENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE.

Having received approval to recruit to the role at the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 21 March 2025, an executive search partner was engaged, with a number of candidates being presented for consideration.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an assessment centre on Monday 11 August 2025. Those candidates who are deemed to be suitable following that process will be invited to the Chief Officer Appointments Panel scheduled for 15 August 2025.

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 established on the Plymouth City Council Senior Management Structure.

The role is currently a Band 4 Chief Officer within the chief officer pay and grading structure and the salary is currently within the range of £87,744 to £121,966 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. Undertake formal interviews for the role of Service Director for Customer Experience & Digital.