

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Date of meeting: 16 January 2026

Title of Report: Recruitment to the role of Service Director – Children, Young People & Families

Lead Member: Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)

Lead Strategic Director: David Haley (Strategic Director of Children's Services)

Author: Chris Squire (Service Director HROD)

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Your Reference: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on the permanent recruitment to the role of Service Director Children, Young People & Families.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Accept the recommendation that one candidate has progressed to interview by this Panel.
3. The Panel undertake the formal interview on Friday 16 January 2026.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options considered are to leave the role vacant or extend the current interim arrangements. These options have been rejected on the basis that it is essential to recruit permanently to this key safeguarding children role within the Children's Services management team to deliver a range of statutory duties for the Local Authority, to support the delivery of the Children's Social Care Reforms and Medium Term Financial Plan, and to ensure continuity of leadership and experience in this role.

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 Children, Young People & Families is a permanent role with an established budget contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Financial Risks

There are no financial risks associated with this proposal. The post is included in the existing budget allocations.

Legal Implications

The legal position regarding the appointment of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers is set out in this report.

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 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: David Haley

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 08/01/26

Cabinet Member approval. Cllr Laing approved by email

Date approved: 09/01/26

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.

Non-statutory posts dealt with under PCC's Chief Officer Appointments Panel process are:

- 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

Reporting to the Director of Children's Services, the Service Director for Children's, Young People & Families is a key role within Plymouth City Council and a member of the Council's senior leadership team. Reporting to the Director of Children's Services, the role is accountable for a range of statutory and non statutory services impacting on the life chances of some of our most vulnerable children, young people and their families. The post also has a leading role in delivering the wider vision for social care, combating social exclusion and corporate parenting as well as the continued improvement of opportunities for care experienced young people, including care leavers. There is statutory guidance which instructs a large part of the activity undertaken in this area. A professional social work qualification and registration with Social Work England are required.

As confirmed at the Chief Officer Appointments Panel on 20 June 2025, it was agreed that an interim be engaged initially for six months, but with the option to extend to twelve months pending the return of the permanent postholder to the role. However, the permanent postholder's employment ended on 31 August 2025. While the Service has continued to function effectively, using an interim, it is acknowledged that the service now requires a permanent position to cover this key role.

4. RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR PERMANENT POST

The timeline for recruitment of this post has been:-

Advert copy	03 November 2025
Advertising and Search commence	06 November 2025
Closing Date	30 November 2025
Longlist meeting	05 December 2025
Preliminary/Technical Interviews (virtual)	10 December 2025
Shortlist meeting	19 December 2025
Assessment Centre (in person)	07 January 2026
Final Interviews (in person)	16 January 2026

After longlisting, two candidates were shortlisted and progressed to the assessment centre on 07 January 2026. Following assessment centre recommendation one candidate will be taken forward to interview on Friday 16 January 2026.

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 £121,996 per annum. Chief Officer pay is linked to national pay bargaining.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel:-

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Accept the recommendation that one candidate has progressed to interview by this Panel.
3. The Panel undertake the formal interview on Friday 16 January 2025.