

Chief Officer Appointments Panel



Date of meeting:	02 March 2026
Title of Report:	Recruitment to the role of Interim Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Chris Squire (Service Director HROD)
Contact Email:	Chris.squire@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
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 Education, Participation and Skills.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. Undertake an interview on Monday 02 March 2026.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options considered are to leave the role vacant whilst permanent recruitment is undertaken. This option has been rejected on the basis that the Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills is a key role which is responsible for improving 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, and continuity of leadership and experience in this role is required. It is therefore recommended that an interim appointment be made.

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 as soon as possible to deliver a range of statutory duties 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 Education Participation and Skills is a permanent role with an established budget contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications

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

Financial Risks

There are no financial risks associated with this proposal.

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: David Haley

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

Date agreed: 24/02/26

Cabinet Member approval. Cllr Cresswell approved by email

Date approved: 25/02/2026

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 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 Education, Participation and Skills (EPS) is a key role to improve education standards, provide access to learning and support 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.

The current Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills has resigned and is currently working their notice period. To provide continuity of leadership and experience in this role it is acknowledged that the service now requires an interim resource to cover this key role whilst a permanent recruitment to the role is undertaken.

4. INTERIM RECRUITMENT UPDATE

We have one candidate to interview for the interim Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills at COAP on 02 March 2026. The candidate is currently working at Plymouth City Council.

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 - £1,200/day (inclusive of charges).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Chief Officer Appointments Panel:

1. Note the content of this report.
2. The Panel undertake a formal interview on 02 March 2026.