
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE BRIEFING

1. Introduction

This document proposes the process to appoint a Permanent Executive Director – Children and Family Services at Somerset Council. It follows the resignation of Julian Wooster as the permanent Director of Children's Services in October 22 and the subsequent appointment of Claire Winter as Acting Director of Children's Services since that time.

The paper presents constitutional and process considerations, as well as salary comparisons for the role. The purpose of this panel is described in section 2.

2. Constitutional Requirements

The requirements for appointing to the Senior Leadership Team are set out in Appendix 1.

Appointments Panel

The consequence of this is that as part of the process, a proposal to appoint a SLT-officer will need to be put before an appointments' panel. The panel will comprise of the Leader, the Opposition Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Council (or their nominated representatives) plus and relevant Cabinet members as consultees.

The role of the panel is to review the terms and conditions of employment relating to a post, make appropriate recommendations to the Chief Executive, decide on the process and to appoint the Appointments Committee to undertake the appointments' process.

Appointments Committee

The Appointments Panel has agreed the process to appoint to the role and has proposed the following membership of the Appointments' Committee:

- Councillor Bill Revans – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Tessa Munt – Lead Member for Children and Families
- Councillor David Fothergill – Opposition Lead Member
- Councillor Frances Nicholson – Opposition Lead Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Leigh Redman – Lead Member for Children's Scrutiny

3. Director of Children's Services – Background

3.1. The current Director of Children's Services, Julian Wooster, resigned from Somerset County Council and his last day in post was 31st October 2022. Since that time the role has been filled on an acting basis by Claire Winter. There is now a requirement to fill the role on a permanent basis as we move into Somerset Council. This role is a key part of the Senior Leadership team and instrumental in helping to create and maintain a financially sustainable council. The post includes functions that are required of the statutory chief officer post for Children's Services.

3.2. The financial and social care challenges facing Somerset Council remain significant and it is therefore vital that this position is filled quickly.

4. Job Description

The revised Job Description and Person Specification for the post of Executive Director - Children and Family Services are shown in the Appendices.

5. Salary

5.1. One of the requirements of the Appointments Panel is to review the terms and conditions of employment for the vacant post, which may include the level of remuneration.

5.2. The Executive Director – Children and Family Services is a Grade 2 post in the Council's Senior Leadership structure. The current salaries for Grade 2 posts are up to £150k depending on experience and reflect market conditions for these posts. Once the Appointments Committee has made its recommendation on the appointment to the post this will be subject to review and confirmation at the next Full Council meeting.

6. Proposed Process

It is proposed that the role is advertised in line with the agreed Recruitment Protocol across all Councils for 7 calendar days. Priority access will still be afforded to staff who are at-risk of redundancy, in line with employment legislation.

Outlined below are the proposed elements of the process with estimated timeframes:

- 13th March 2023: advert goes live
- 20th March: advert closes AM and shortlisting PM
- 22nd March 2023: Interview panel: with Appointments' Committee as outlined above and Duncan Sharkey – Chief Executive Officer Somerset Council.
- TBC - Full Council Meeting, in line with 7.1.2 c(ii) of the constitution 'emergency cover for the statutory Chief Officer roles (other than Chief Executive) where these positions become vacant between Full Council meetings. Any such agreement will be subject to review and confirmation at the next available Full Council meeting'.

Melissa Fairhurst, Strategic Manager HR Business

13th March 2023

Appendix One – Constitution

Relevant paragraphs from the SCC Constitution are 7.1.4 – 7.1.15

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM APPOINTMENTS (AND THE MONITORING OFFICER)

7.1.4 Appointments to these posts must involve elected Members.

In addition, in the absence of full-time contracted employees in relevant SLT posts, appointments to the following interim posts are also subject to the requirements of section 7:

- Interim Director of Children's Services
- Interim Deputy Director of Children's Services
- Interim Operations Director of Children's Services.

The Monitoring Officer post is not part of SLT but appointments to this post will similarly involve members.

7.1.5 Where a vacancy occurs in these appointments, the recruitment process requires the appointment of an Appointments Panel and then an Appointments Committee.

Appointments Panel:

7.1.6 The Panel reviews the terms and conditions of employment relating to the post and where appropriate makes recommendations to the Chief Executive for any changes; decides the appointments process or other course of action; and appoints the Appointments Committee to undertake the appointments process. This review includes reviewing the job and person specifications, the means of advertisement and short-listing arrangements. The Panel will then appoint an Appointments Committee. The Panel can convene virtually or meet as required.

7.1.7 If a Panel decides that no changes to terms and conditions are necessary when it reviews a vacant post (and that the salary will be advertised at the bottom of the range [the 'spot' for the grade] for posts on grades 1 to 3) then the Panel has authority to progress the recruitment without the need to seek further approvals. If a Panel wishes to make changes to the terms and conditions of a vacant post (other than the post of Chief Executive) then these are subject to the approval of the Chief Executive having obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Council. This includes where a Panel wishes to advertise a salary for a post on grades 1 to 3 (other than the post of Chief Executive) above the 'spot' at the bottom of the range. This must be the subject of a Panel recommendation to the Chief Executive for decision. If the Panel's recommendations for changes to terms and conditions relate to the post of Chief Executive then Full Council must agree these changes. In all cases the Panel will appoint the Appointments Committee.

7.1.8 In respect of the appointment of interims to SLT posts (including the post of Monitoring Officer) the Panel will present a business case to the Chief Executive which takes into account:

- value-for-money for the taxpayer
- the evaluated grade of the post to be covered
- the public profile of the post
- risks to the Council
- the labour market, both nationally and locally in the South West, for interims providing cover for similar posts in councils of a similar size

7.1.9 The Panel comprises 5 Members, the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the largest Opposition Group, the lead and opposition lead for Children and Families and the lead member of Children's Scrutiny.

Appointments Committee

7.1.10 The Committee will:

(a) Interview all short-listed candidates and either

(b)

- Appoint a suitable candidate to the post; or
- In the case of the Chief Executive make a recommendation to the Full Council who must approve the proposed appointment before an offer of appointment is made; or
- Follow any other course of action decided upon by the Appointments Panel.

7.1.11 The Committee comprises a maximum of 5 Members including:

(a) The Leader of the Council (or his/her nominated representative)

(b) The Leader of the largest Opposition Group (or his/her nominated representative)

(c) Up to 3 other Members of the Council selected in accordance with the rules of political proportionality and including the relevant Cabinet Member.

Notes:

(a) It is a statutory requirement that at least 1 member of an Appointments Committee must be a Member of the Cabinet.

(b) The Committee appoints its own Chair.

(c) All Members of the Committee must have up-to-date knowledge of and have received training in the areas of Recruitment and Equalities.

(d) The selection process must be conducted in accordance with the Council's agreed Code of Practice.

7.1.12 An offer of employment to these posts shall only be made where no justifiable objection has been made by the Cabinet member.

7.1.13 If the Committee during the course of an appointment process wishes to vary the terms and conditions or the salary already agreed for a specific post, then such a proposal is subject to the approval of the Chief Executive having obtained the agreement of the Leader of the Council. The exception to this is where the Committee's recommendations relate to the appointment of the Chief Executive where only Full Council may amend the terms and conditions to be applied to the post.

7.1.14 The Appointments Committee will interview candidates for interim appointments at SLT (and to include the post of Monitoring Officer) level to assess their suitability for the role and will confirm appointments.

7.1.15 Chief Officer level interim appointments will be subject to formal review by the Chief Executive at the end of six months and at six monthly intervals thereafter to assess whether there is a requirement to retain their services. The original Appointments Committee will be consulted where the Chief Executive proposes to extend the engagement of an interim. The final decision on the extension of an interim rests with the Chief Executive.

Appendix Two – Job Description & Person Specification



SOMERSET COUNCIL

Role title	Executive Director – Children and Family Services
Directorate	Children and Family Services
Reporting to	Chief Executive
Grade	
Evaluation ref;	
<p>Role purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Strategic advisor on all Children and Family services, providing strategic leadership, direction, and financial management to ensure high quality service, developing collaborative working with Executive Lead Members, and other leaders to ensure innovative approaches to service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction that are aligned with the strategic priorities of the Council. As the Director of Children and Family Services for the council- responsible for children and young people receiving education or Childrens social care services across Somerset and all children looked after by the council regardless of where they are placed working with other agencies to improve their outcomes. Provide ambitious strategic vision, leadership and direction to Somerset Council and the Children and Family Services Directorate. Collaborating with Council Members, the Chief Executive, the Senior Leadership Team, and partner organisations to develop the culture and achieve the aims, strategic priorities, and desired outcomes of the Council. Drive transformational, organisational and system change to achieve excellent member, customer and partner relationships while leading a Directorate that delivers cost-effective, high-quality services to residents and customers of Somerset. Promote and represent Somerset on the national and potentially international stage in line with the Council’s vision, values, and corporate plan. Provides strategic leadership to the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children & Families Commissioning & Performance Inclusion Education Partnerships and Skills 	

Key results area	Accountability
Member of the Senior Leadership Team	Work collectively to adopt a whole systems approach to translate corporate priorities and targets into a range of internally and externally delivered services.
Executive Director Corporate Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council’s strategic priorities and meet the Council’s financial targets, as a member of the Council’s Executive Leadership Team. • Collaborate with Elected Members to ensure the strategic direction of the services within the Children and Family Services Directorate reflect the statutory requirements and corporate aims and strategic objectives; taking account of any impact those decisions may have on other Council services. • Lead the Children and Family Services leadership team with a clear identity in terms of its flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing. • Advise Elected Members in respect of planning, operational and policy issues relation to the Children and Family Services Directorate. • Engage in strategic partnerships and promote and communicate the Council’s services. • Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council’s vision, strategic aims, and values. • Value the diversity of Somerset’s communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment. • Function as a role model for Somerset’s vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and responsive to local needs. • Develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Children and Family Services Directorate. • Ensure that all services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses, as well as defining performance measures linked to customer care. • Lead the delivery of the Councils’ key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from managers and staff from across the Children and Family Services Directorate. • Ensure that the Council can meet new challenges and initiatives by keeping abreast of challenges and opportunities facing public services, taking proactive steps to exert influence across the broad range of policy makers, public bodies, and suppliers. • Provide strategic oversight and leadership for both Corporate and Directorate specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement. • Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise. • Member of the corporate on call roster at strategic level to set strategy and co-ordinate at the tactical level activity when responding to internal and external emergencies/major incidents. This may require a response during unsocial hours. • Undertake relevant training and exercising commensurate with Strategic Officer responsibilities including but not limited to Multi-agency Gold Incident Commander (MAGIC). • Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies, ensuring there is effective resourcing and management of operations to deliver this. • Function as change champion to translate organisational ambitions into real achievements. The role must balance internal and external focus to ensure the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the Council.
Strategic Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic accountability for the development of a coherent and integrated approach to Children and Family Services. • Lead and continuously shape the strategic vision and priorities for Children and Family Services in line with the Council's strategic priorities and the national and international agenda. • Lead the development of integrated and community focused service delivery for Children and Family services through stakeholder engagement and increasing the alignment to other services. • Maximise and create opportunities to innovate and provide greater flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the Council, Somerset's communities, and the national priorities for Children and Family Services.
Financial/Budget Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the preparation of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the annual preparation of the Council's revenue and capital budgets. Hold individual responsibility and accountability for the Directorate's budgeting and medium to long term financial planning. • Shared responsibility and accountability with the Chief Executive and Executive Directors to create and champion public and social value for better outcomes and lower cost, seeking creative funding and investment opportunities to ensure financial accountability and resilience.
Performance Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective measures are in place to monitor and evaluate services performance against service targets. • Evaluate changes in legislation, policy and needs against existing strategy. • Identify and deliver the need/opportunity to modify strategic priorities and targets.

Directorate Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver outstanding leadership and management for all staff employed across the Directorate motivating and providing development opportunities for employees to ensure the delivery of current and future service commitments.
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular updates and engagement with Elected Members, Government departments, Inspectorates, partner organisations, and other Directors across the Council to improve service outcomes. • Function as the Council's representative/Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for key partnerships, project and programme boards and leads on complex projects, issues, negotiations, and dispute resolution. • Influence and inspires senior stakeholders including public bodies business and community groups, government, and government departments, establishing credibility to realise new opportunities to promote Somerset's local and national reputation.

Qualifications / Knowledge / Experience / Skills

Qualifications

- Relevant degree or professional qualification, or relevant professional experience. **Essential**
- Evidence of work-related continuing managerial and professional development that meets requirements of the faculty of public health or other equivalent professional body. **Essential**

Knowledge

- Knowledge and understanding of the statutory, policy, strategic, and service delivery framework in which local government operates, and the major issues facing local government. **Essential**
- Understanding of the social, economic, and technical challenges and opportunities within Somerset. **Essential**
- In depth knowledge and understanding of the statutory responsibilities relating to Children Services. **Essential**

Experience

- Significant experience of the delivery of Children and Family services at a senior management level **Essential**
- Senior strategic leadership experience within Children and Family services, including translating organisational aspirations and national policies and priorities into strategic outcomes and long-term plans. **Essential**
- Significant senior strategic leadership experience of translating organisational aspirations and national policies and priorities into strategic outcomes and long-term plans. **Essential**
- Significant experience of managing within a complex and diverse organisation which operates within a political environment. **Desirable**
- Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and lead corporate and multi-agency projects and initiatives effectively. **Essential**
- Experience of positively promoting and leading large scale and complex transformation programmes involving structural and cultural change. **Essential**
- Significant experience of successfully working with Elected or Board members on complex issues and understanding of democratic arrangements, effective governance, and scrutiny. **Desirable**
- Prior experience of developing and successfully implementing strategies. **Essential**
- Demonstrable experience of developing a high-performance, cost-effective culture for an

organisation, which delivers outstanding outcomes, through a variety of mechanisms, including structure, working methods, rewards, contracts etc. **Desirable**

- Successful track record in building and maintaining strong & effective relationships with key partners, including for example NHS, Police, VCFSE, national government, private sector. **Desirable**
- Proven track record of accountability for significant budgets and ensuring the delivery of services within agreed resources. **Essential**
- Substantial experience of commissioning services. **Desirable**
- Experience in a senior leadership role in a Unitary authority. **Desirable**

Skills

- Authority and credibility to work effectively in a political environment and establish positive relationships with Members on complex issues providing clear advice on strategy and policy decisions. **Essential**
- Excellent interpersonal and communication and presentation skills, with proven ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences both horizontally and vertically throughout the organisation and wider partners. **Essential**
- Proven leadership ability, with evidence of developing and embedding vision, setting direction, inspiring confidence, encouraging, motivating, and influencing others. **Essential**
- Proven ability to think innovatively and conceptually. **Essential**
- Highly developed stakeholder management skills with a track record of successfully influencing the strategic direction. **Essential**

Personal Attributes

Please refer to table below.

Dimensions of role

- Strategic oversight of the Children and Family Services budget – currently c. 123m per annum
- Leadership and management of a service of approximately 1014 FTE employees.

Notes

Working conditions:	N/A
Working arrangements:	N/A