

County Council
Wednesday 5 October 2022
10.00 am Hollinsworth Hall, The
Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh
Lane, Huntworth, Somerset, TA6 6LQ



SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The Members of the County Council

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Item 7	Report of the Monitoring Officer (Appointments Committee) (Pages 3 - 6) To consider a report from the Monitoring Officer confirming the appointment of an Acting Director of Children's Services following the Appointments Committee meeting on 30 September 2022.
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Published on 30 September 2022

Democratic Services, A Block, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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Appointment of an Acting Director of Childrens Services for Somerset County Council

Lead Member: Cllr Liz Leyshon – Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Finance and Human Resources

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officer & Author: Melissa Fairhurst – Strategic Manager HR Business - Resourcing

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The current Director of Children’s Services, Julian Wooster, has resigned from Somerset County Council and his last day in post will be 31st October 2022. 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.
- 1.2. The financial and social care challenges facing Somerset County Council remain significant and it is therefore vital that this position is filled quickly.
- 1.3. Somerset County Council is fortunate in having an experienced Deputy Director Children’s Services who can act-up in the role, pending the appointment of a permanent successor. In terms of a permanent replacement for the Director of Childrens Services role, a full recruitment campaign will start in the late spring of 2023
- 1.4. The interview for the appointment was held on 30th September 2022, with the Appointments Committee meeting at 3.20pm on 30th September to take a decision on the recommendation of a candidate to the Council on 5th October.
- 1.5. The Appointments Committee, at its meeting on 30th September, resolved to recommend to the meeting of Full Council on 5th October that Mrs Claire Winter be appointed to the post of Acting Director of Childrens Services from 1st November 2022 for a period of 6 to 9 months.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Council accepts the recommendation of the Appointments Committee to appoint Claire Winter as the Acting Director of Childrens Services from 1st November 2022 for a period of 6 to 9 months.
- 2.2. To appoint on a pro-rata salary of £140,000 per annum, with all other terms and conditions remaining the same as current.

3. Legal Requirements

- 3.1. Section 18 of the Children Act 2004 requires the Council to appoint an officer to role of the Director of Children’s Services and sets out the functions of the Council which are the appointee’s responsibility.

4. Constitutional Requirements

4.1. Appointment to the post of Director of Childrens Services must be conducted in accordance with and the Council's constitutional requirements. These are set out below.

4.2. Appointments Panel

The proposal to appoint an Acting Director of Childrens Services was put before an appointments' panel. The panel consisted of the Deputy Leader, the Lead Member for Children and Families and the Opposition Lead Member for Children and Families.

The role of the Panel is to review the terms and conditions of employment relating to a post and where changes are required, make appropriate recommendations, decide on the process and to appoint the Appointments Committee to undertake the appointments' process.

4.3. Appointments' Committee

The Appointments' Panel agreed the process to appoint to the role and appointed the Appointments' Committee. The Appointments Committee may comprise up to 5 members: The Leader of the Council (or their nominated representative), the leader of the largest opposition group (or their nominated representative), and up to 3 other members of the Council selected in accordance with the rules of political proportionality and including the relevant Executive Member.

For the purpose of recruiting to the post of Acting Director of Childrens Services, the Committee consisted of the same membership as the Appointments Panel. The committee consulted the Acting Chief Executive and the Strategic Manager HR Advisory.

The role of the Appointments' Committee is to 'run' the process. This includes agreeing the shortlist for the role, interviewing and then making a recommendation for appointment to the Council. This must be done before an offer of employment is made.

4.4. Offer of Appointment

The appointment of officers at SLT level must be approved by the Chief Executive (CEO).

If the Council approves the recommendations in this paper the CEO will inform the executive of the proposed appointment and allow a period for members of the executive to object to the appointment in accordance with SCC's constitution. Providing no material objection is made the CEO will then make the appointment.

5. The Process

5.1. For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 above the role was ringfenced only to the current Deputy Director Children's Services, Claire Winter, who was interviewed for the role. Outlined below is the process that has been followed:

- 26th September 2022: Meeting of the Appointments Panel. Salary benchmarking work completed to ensure value for money
- 30th September 2022: Interview panel followed later by Appointments Committee

- Following completion of interviews Appointments' Committee/Panel recommend a suitable candidate to the Chief Executive for approval
- 5th October 2022 - 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.

6. Implications

- 6.1.** There are no financial implications to this decision, as there is no increase to salary for this post, is in accordance with the Pay Policy and is within existing budgets. There will be no other costs arising, as we will not be engaging with a recruitment partner due to internally ringfencing the opportunity. This approach is likely to save a significant amount in comparison to the daily rate we would pay for an interim.

7. Background Papers

Report to the Appointments Committee – 30 September 2022.

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