

Somerset Council

Full Council
20 February 2024



Report of the Chief Executive

Executive Member(s): Councillor Bill Revans, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance and Communications and Councillor Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport and Digital Services

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Duncan Sharkey, Chief Executive

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1. Summary/ Background

- 1.1.** There is an urgent operational and financial need to agree emergency cover arrangements for one vacant post of Service Director, Infrastructure and Transport Services, to ensure strong leadership is in place to deliver the planned improvements and efficiencies to this service and the transition of contracts. A review of this role is proposed before permanent recruitment is undertaken to ensure the structure meets the objectives of the Transformation Project.
- 1.2.** The Council has qualified and suitably experienced Strategic Managers/ Heads of Service who can act up to cover the Service Director role to provide emergency cover for a temporary period to provide stability and continuity of leadership.
- 1.3.** Under the Councils Constitution Part I: 5 (Officer Employment Procedures /Arrangements) paragraph 1.4, the Chief Executive has authority after having sought the agreement of the Leader, and after appropriate consultations, to agree:(ii) emergency cover arrangements for the post specified 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.

- 1.4.** Under the decision-making powers delegated to him as the Head of Paid Service and under section I 5 1.4(ii) of the Council Constitution, the Chief Executive took the decision, in December 2023 in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cllr Richard Wilkins, Lead Member for Transport and Digital, to make an emergency temporary appointment to the proposed post of Service Director Infrastructure and Transport, following an internal recruitment process. This decision is subject to review and confirmation by Full Council, which is outlined in the recommendations in paragraph 2 of this report.
- 1.5.** The recommendations support the vision and priorities of the Somerset Council, as outlined in the 2023-2027 Council Plan, especially those aligned to ensuring we are:
- Fairer Ambitious Somerset - our passenger transport service ensures good access to schools, further education and training.
 - Greener and more sustainable - we are delivering more sustainable transport and decarbonising our operations,
 - Flourishing - we are enabling growth and development through the planning system, attracting major infrastructure investment, and maintaining our highways and transport networks which are the backbone of our economic performance,
 - Resilient - we ensure our transport networks are resilient to flooding, extreme weather and climate change impacts - operating emergency out of hours provision to make sure the roads are kept clear 24hrs a day,
 - Healthy and caring - we are running non-emergency health transport, promoting physical activity through active travel and tackling areas of poor air quality linked to traffic congestion.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** Full Council confirms the temporary appointment of Mike O'Dowd-Jones, Head of Service, Highways and Transport, to provide emergency cover to the post of Service Director Infrastructure and Transport, with effect from 15 December 2023 for a temporary period until 30 June 2024.

3. Implications

- 3.1. Financial/Risk:** The salary for the proposed emergency temporary appointment will be covered within the existing Climate and Place establishment budget.

This proposal directly contributes to mitigate the risk that Climate and Place are unable to achieve MTFP targets/deliver a balanced budget.

- 3.2. Legal/HR/Equalities:** All necessary aspects of the Councils Constitution and employment law will be followed in relation to emergency temporary

appointments, formal consultation on any proposed changes to workforce and subsequent permanent appointments. It is therefore considered that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this decision paper. An EIA will be produced as part of the formal business case for any proposed permanent changes in due course.

4. Background Papers

4.1. Appendix 1 - Chief Executive Decision Report

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.