
SERVICE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE BRIEFING

1. Introduction

This document proposes the process to appoint a Permanent Service Director – Children and Family Services at Somerset Council (previously known as the Deputy Director for Children’s Services). The previous permanent Deputy Director has now been recommended for appointment to the permanent Executive Director Children and Families post for Somerset Council. Since November 2022, following an internal ring-fenced recruitment process within SCC only, the Deputy Director post has been covered, on an acting basis, by two colleagues.

Now that the Executive Director post has been filled permanently the Appointments Panel have agreed to start the process to recruit permanently to the Service Director post for Somerset Council via an internal and external process at the same time.

This new Service Director role for Somerset Council 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.

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 Liz Leyshon – Deputy Leaver of the Council
- Councillor Tessa Munt – Lead Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Frances Nicholson – Opposition Lead Member for Children and Families

- Councillor Leigh Redman – Chair of Scrutiny for Policy, Children and Families Committee

3. Service Director Children and Families – Background

3.1. Since November 2022 the work has been covered by two staff acting up. There is now a requirement to fill the role on a permanent basis as we move into Somerset Council and because the Executive Director post has now been recruited to on a permanent basis. 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 Service 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 Service Director – Children and Family Services is a tier 3 post in the Council's Senior Leadership structure. It has been evaluated at SD2 with a salary of between £110 thousand and £115 thousand per annum on a spot point and will be advertised as this.

6. Proposed Process

The role will be advertised from W/c 27th March. It is proposed that the role is advertised externally and internally at the same time. In line with the agreed Recruitment Protocol across it will be advertised across all Councils. 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:

- Monday 27th March 2023: Papers finalised and Appointments Panel held
- Wednesday 29th March: Advert placed
- Monday 10th April: Advert closes
- Wednesday 12th April: Shortlisting takes place
- Friday 14th April – Interviews take place and Appointments' Committee recommend a suitable candidate to the Chief Executive.

Melissa Fairhurst, Strategic Manager HR Business

3rd April 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:

- Director of Children’s Services
- Deputy Director of Children’s Services
- 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	Service Director – Children & Families
Directorate	Children & Family Services
Reporting to	Executive Director- Children Services
Grade	SD 2
Evaluation ref;	NOM0014
Role purpose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead, direct and manage a range of children, young people and family services either directly managed or commissioned from other providers providing creative ideas and insights and applying functional expertise to support the development of a long term (5-10 year) programme of improvement and development for the services managed. • Drive transformational organisational change to achieve excellent staff, member, customer, and partner relationships while delivering cost-effective, high-quality services that reflect our environmental agenda. 	
Key results area	Accountability
Service Director Corporate Responsibilities	<p>Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council’s strategic priorities and meet the Council’s financial targets, as a member of the Council’s Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Advise & guide Elected Members in respect of planning, operational and policy issues in relation to Children and Families teams.</p> <p>Lead Children and Families teams 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.</p> <p>Engage in strategic partnerships and promote and communicate the Council’s services.</p>

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 Families teams.

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.

Drives the delivery of the Councils' key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from managers and staff from across the Children and Families teams.

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.

Support 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.

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 which may require a response during unsocial hours.

Undertake relevant training and exercises 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.
Service Delivery	<p>Provides the long term (5-10) year strategic direction for the delivery of innovative, customer and community focused, cost-effective services which support the overall aims of the Council for: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Looked After and Care Leavers Children with Disabilities Preventative Services (early help, edge of care, child in need, child protection) Quality Assurance Principal Social Worker <p>Lead the direction of all Children and Families related services to ensure the highest possible quality of care, safeguarding, development and support for children and young people to secure the best outcomes for children and young people whilst representing best value for the Council.</p> <p>Lead the development and operation of social care and safeguarding to the highest possible practice standards to ensure excellent outcomes for all children and young people and to secure the best possible OFSTED rating.</p> <p>Ensure that the interests of children and young people's social care, youth offending services, and safeguarding matters are fully recognised and integrated into strategies and commissioning plans, including the County Plan.</p> <p>Ensure that the 'voice' of children and their families influences practice and strategy at all levels.</p>
Service Development	<p>Drive the delivery of all strategic and operational decisions for future children & family services, ensuring cost effective and quality assured contracts and partnerships are in place to deliver successful and seamless services.</p> <p>Ensure that Children and Families services are managed in a sustainable, safe, and cost-effective manner.</p> <p>Lead an integrated strategy that will deliver services designed to provide the best opportunity for Somerset to achieve its environmental and economic goals.</p> <p>Lead the development and delivery of performance standards and targets with multi agency partners to support the achievement of the Councils ambitions for Somerset residents.</p> <p>Develop effective relationships with government departments, regional and local agencies and partners, communities and the voluntary and third sector to influence policy and practise to the benefit of our communities.</p>
Financial/Budget Management	Oversees all team budgets (capital and revenue) to ensure they are deployed to achieve value for money, are well monitored and controlled and resources allocated accordingly.

Performance Frameworks	<p>Ensure effective measures are in place to monitor and evaluate demand and supplier performance against contract requirements and to initiate and manage actions for service improvement and intervention where appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure effective processes and channels are in place for feedback from users, communities, partners, and providers, encouraging co-production wherever possible.</p> <p>Ensure the effectiveness of service performance in terms of achieving the purpose and outcomes as defined and contributing to wider council priorities.</p> <p>Evaluate changes in legislation, policy and needs against the existing strategy.</p>
Team Management	<p>Deliver effective leadership and management of all staff employed across the service motivating and providing development opportunities for employees to ensure the delivery of current and future service commitments.</p>
Stakeholder engagement	<p>Function as the Council's Subject Matter Expert in relation to Children and Families. Ensure regular updates and engagement with Elected Members, Government departments, Inspectorates, partner organisations, regional and national bodies, stakeholders, Local Community Networks, town/parish/city councils, the voluntary and community sector, and other Directors across the Council to improve outcomes.</p>

Knowledge / skills / experience

Qualifications

- Relevant degree and professional qualification (e.g.,) **Essential**
- Post-qualification, e.g., MBA, Masters. **Desirable**
- Evidence of work related continuing professional development. **Essential**

Knowledge

- Extensive and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the national policy context, regulatory environment, financial, legislative, climate change and major issues facing the Infrastructure and Transport area. **Essential**
- In depth knowledge and understanding of the statutory responsibilities relating to the Childrens Social Care Teams area **Essential**

Experience

- Significant experience of policy development and delivery of Childrens Social Care services in a public sector environment. **Essential**
- Substantial leadership and managerial experience and skills gained at a senior level. **Essential**
- Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and lead corporate and multi-agency projects and initiatives effectively, as well as working with communities and voluntary sector organisations **Desirable.**
- Substantial experience of commissioning services, including procurement and contract management. **Essential**
- Substantial leadership and managerial experience and skills gained at a senior level. **Essential**
- Significant experience in securing funding for, commissioning of and overseeing delivery of major projects and services, including accountability on complex funding regimes. **Essential**

Skills

- Proven ability to think innovatively and conceptually and deliver against this, including through securing funding and shaping services and partnerships to achieve corporate goals.

Essential

- Authority and credibility to work effectively in a political environment and establish positive relationships with Members and fellow officers, providing clear advice on strategy and policy decisions and complex issues **Desirable.**
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills, with proven ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences throughout the organisation and wider partners to build and maintain strong relationships. **Desirable**

Dimensions of role

Strategic oversight of the revenue budget approx. £75M per annum and a significant capital budget.

Leadership and management of a service of 550 employees. (Note this is an indicative figure)

Notes

Competencies / attributes	Somerset Council has developed an attributes framework which will be a key component of the role; this can be found on the Councils website.
Working conditions:	N/A
Working arrangements:	N/A