

OPEN - Report

NOT FOR PUBLICATION - Appendix 1 of the report

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 and 2 of Part 1 Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appointments Committee

19 March 2025

**Recruitment and Selection for post of Executive Director
Children's Services and Governance, Compliance and
Monitoring Officer**

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: AP/10/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update on the recruitment and selection arrangements for the Executive Director Children's Services (DCS).
- 2 To provide a shortlist of candidates for final assessment as part of the recruitment and selection process.
- 3 To provide a timeline for the recruitment to the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer post.
- 4 The report contributes to the delivery of Council services through the recruitment to a key vacant senior management post.

Executive Summary

- 5 The report provides an update on the current recruitment and selection process for the post of Executive Director Children's Services (DCS).
- 6 The post was advertised with a closing date of 16 February 2025. There were 7 applications.
- 7 On 24 February 2025, the Appointments Committee approved a longlist of 6 candidates to progress to the assessment of technical ability and potential suitability for the post.

- 8 The Appointments Committee is requested to:
- consider the feedback in respect of the technical assessment and potential suitability of the longlisted candidates; and
 - to approve a shortlist of applicants to progress to further assessment and formal interview.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Appointments Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the update on the recruitment and selection process.
2. Approve a shortlist of applicants from the information provided in the Part 2 Appendix 1 for the post of Executive Director Children's Services (DCS) to progress to further assessment and formal interview.
3. Agree to the proposed timeline for the advertisement for the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer post.

Background

- 9 On 24 February 2025, the Appointments Committee approved a longlist of candidates to progress to the assessment of technical ability and potential suitability for the post of Executive Director Children's Services (DCS).
- 10 The assessment of technical ability and potential suitability for the post has been undertaken by Starfish Recruitment, our recruitment partner, together with Linda Clegg, NW Children's Improvement Advisor – LGA as a technical expert.
- 11 Appendix 1 provides the CVs and supporting statements for longlisted candidates together with a report on the technical assessments.
- 12 Appendix 1 is Part 2 and is exempt from publication in accordance with Chapter 3, Part 2, Paragraph 24 under the categories 'Information relating to any individual' and 'Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual'. The public in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information as this
- maintains the council's confidential recruitment process to ensure that it can recruit the best candidate for the role, and
 - ensures the candidates' personal data is protected and there is no breach of data protection, and
 - does not undermine the recruitment process.

- 13 The Appointments Committee is requested to carefully consider the reports from the technical assessment, and to agree on a shortlist of candidates.
- 14 The shortlisted candidates will be invited for further assessment and formal interview as follows:
- Assessment Centre activities on 24 March 2025 i.e. 1:1 with Chief Executive and CLT and Direct Reports panel
 - Further Assessment Centre activities, presentation and formal interview with the Appointments Committee on 25 March 2025.
- 15 Feedback from the assessment centre sessions will be provided to the Appointments Committee to inform the decision on the successful candidate together with the candidates' responses to questions during the formal interview.
- 16 With respect to the statutory post of Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer post, Appointments Committee are requested to agree a new recruitment timeline.
- 17 It is proposed that we will undertake the process with our recruitment partner Starfish Recruitment. We recommend that we advertise the role from 20 March 2025, and that the closing date for the advertisement will be 26 April 2025. This will ensure that we can invite the widest pool possible recognising that Easter holidays will fall within that period.
- 18 It is further proposed that for this appointment we will post an advert in two specific legal publications to maximise interest in this important statutory post.
- 19 Subject to Appointments Committee agreement officers will schedule longlisting, shortlisting and other assessment centre meetings in line with the other Executive Director and Director appointments already underway. This will ensure that we are maintaining consistency in this significant recruitment exercise.

Consultation and Engagement

- 20 Not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 21 In accordance with the Constitution, the Appointments Committee is required to undertake the recruitment and selection process for three posts in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules.

Other Options Considered

- 22 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 23 On 16 October and 11 December 2024, Full Council approved the Phase 1 senior management structure with the additional new posts and salaries over £100,000 in line with Cheshire East Council's constitution. The Executive Director of Children's Services is an existing post in the senior management structure.
- 24 In line with Cheshire East Council's constitution, the Appointments Committee is responsible for selecting the successful candidate for the post of Executive Director Children's Services (DCS) as a Statutory Director.
- 25 A fair, transparent and objectively justified selection process with due regard to equality laws should be followed for this selection phase of the recruitment process to reduce the risk of potential legal challenge.
- 26 Any proposed salary or other relevant particulars of employment should comply with the Council's pay policy statement, pay framework and other relevant policies.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 27 The revised senior management structure was approved at full council on 16 October and 11 December 2024.
- 28 The posts being referred to in this latest report will be budgeted from 1 April 2025 and included in the MTFS and budget for the 2025/26 onwards.
- 29 The Council report noted that "there is a small difference between costs of the current structure versus the final structure, reflecting small variances in grading between temporary and permanent arrangement. These costs would need to be managed by the relevant services areas as would normally be case when appointing at a spot salary".
- 30 The budget for further stages of the senior management restructure will need to be confirmed on a case-by-case basis.

Policy

- 31 The recruitment to this post is key to the Council's need to provide capacity and leadership within the Senior Management Team to meet the current fiscal challenges and to deliver its transformation programme.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 32 There are no direct equality implications.

- 33 All equality considerations will be taken into account as part of the recruitment process for these posts.

Human Resources

- 34 Actions will be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and appropriate HR policies and procedures.

Rural Communities

- 35 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 36 This is a significant appointment for positive impact of the lives and outcomes for Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Public Health

- 37 There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

- 38 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Sara Duncalf, Head of Human Resources sara.duncalf@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Part 2 – CVs and feedback from assessment of technical ability and potential suitability for the roles in respect of longlisted applicants for the three roles (to follow)
Background Papers:	None