

OPEN

Council

11 December 2024

Senior Management Structure – Children’s Services

Report of: Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive

Report Reference No: C/14/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

1. To seek agreement that Corporate Policy Committee will recommend to full Council the approval, in principle of one new post, subject to consultation on the staffing structure, where the remuneration will be more than £100,000 per year.
2. To set out the amended proposed new senior management structure within the Children’s Services.
3. To outline the business case and rationale for these proposed changes in line with the Children’s Services Improvement Plan.
4. It also sets out the current interim arrangements which have been in place since September 2024. The proposed new structure would replace and formalise these arrangements, subject to formal consultation.

Executive Summary

5. Children’s services embarked on a transformation programme approved by Council in February 2023. The need to transform Children’s Services was further highlighted by the recent failed inspection in February 2024 where Ofsted made a judgement that overall services to children in Cheshire East was inadequate.
6. In October 2024, full council approved Phase 1 of the Cheshire East Senior Management restructure, following consultation with recognised trade unions and affected staff in August. This phase was essential to

provide capacity and stability to the senior management structure across the council.

7. In Phase 1, the two-director structure model was formalised within Children's Services. This structure had been in place on a temporary basis following the Director of Education (14-19 Skills) leaving the council in May 2023.
8. However, a review of capacity of the Children's Services senior management structure as part of the work being undertaken to implement the improvement and impact action plan has identified the need for an additional permanent director post to ensure an effective leadership structure. It is therefore proposed to introduce, subject to consultation, the post of Director of Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships.

Recommendations: -

That full Council: -

- 1 agrees the proposed change to the senior management staffing structure for Children's Services, subject to prior consultation with all parties affected by the decision, including any Trade Unions.
- 2 approves in principle a new post, subject to consultation with staff and trade unions on the staffing structure, where the remuneration will more than £100,000 per year.

Background

9. In summer/autumn 2024, as part of phase 1 of the Cheshire East council senior management restructure, the permanent structure within Children's Services moved to a two director model creating a Director of Education (0-19), Inclusion, Strong Start and Integration (deputy DCS) and a Director of Social Care (deputy DCS). This formalised the temporary arrangements that had been in place since the postholder of the Director of Education and 14-19 Skills left the council in May 2023.
10. However, a review of capacity of the Children's Services senior management structure as part of the work being undertaken to implement the improvement and impact action plan has identified the need for an additional permanent director post to ensure an effective leadership structure. It is therefore proposed to introduce, subject to consultation, the post of Director of Commissioning, Quality Assurance and

Partnership, reporting to the Executive Director Children's Services. The job description is provided in Appendix 2.

11. Currently, an interim director has been appointed to fulfil these duties as part of the improvement and impact action plan.
12. This role will have key responsibility for providing strategic direction and leadership to ensure that children's services are effectively commissioned, monitored, and improved. It will help align services with the needs of children and families, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, it will be essential for establishing and maintaining high standards in services provided to children and their families and ensure that services meet regulatory and statutory requirements. Safeguarding children is a paramount concern and with a dedicated director who can oversee safeguarding practices, ensuring that all partnerships and services prioritise the safety and well-being of children will keep the organisation safe. This includes training staff, developing policies, and responding to safeguarding concerns effectively both at a team level but across the partnership and provide strategic alignment to regional and national learning.
13. Current Children's commissioning arrangements have been delivered within adult services commissioning team. Being delivered outside of Children's services, these arrangements have impacted effective commissioning and the quality assurance of providers in relation to suitable placements for our children in care and care leavers. This new dedicated role will oversee budgeting, funding allocations, and workforce development to ensure that services are both sustainable and capable of meeting demand. In addition, it will be well placed to ensure that all services comply with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as internal policies. This accountability is crucial for maintaining public trust and ensuring that children receive safe and effective care.
14. The proposed director for children's commissioning, quality assurance and partnerships will fulfil a vital role in ensuring that services are well-coordinated, high-quality, and focused on the safety and well-being of children creating a comprehensive and effective system of support for children and families.
15. The director post within senior management structure for Adults, Health and Integration which combines both Adults and Children's Commissioning will be reviewed to avoid any overlap in duties and its focus refined. This will be completed prior to the recruitment and selection process commencing.
16. It is anticipated that the salary for this post may exceed £100,000 per annum. Under the constitution, full council must approve posts where the salary exceeds or is likely to exceed £100,000.

Financial Implications

17. The revised costs for the Phase 1 Children's Services Senior Management structure are shown in appendix 3.

Recruitment Proposals

18. Agreement is sought, in principle and subject to consultation, for a new position of Director of Children's Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships.
19. Subject to consultation with affected staff and the trade unions, the recruitment and selection process will be supported by Starfish, Cheshire East's executive search partner procured to undertake the senior management recruitment campaign.

Consultation and Engagement

20. Subject to the approval of the recommendations laid out in this report, there will be formal consultation on the proposals within Children's Services with affected staff and the trade unions, in accordance with the Council's employment policies.

Reasons for Recommendations

21. The key reasons for the recommendations are linked to the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 – 25, strategic aims and objectives:

An enabling organisation:

- Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.
- Listen, learn and respond to our residents, promoting opportunities for a two-way conversation.
- Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation.
- Support and develop our workforce to be confident, motivated, innovative, resilient and empowered.

22. The new proposals within Children's Services meet its objectives within the Integrated Children's Strategy and provide for dedicated roles in key areas within the Directorate, to support the delivery of the transformation strategy and improvement plan.

Other Options Considered

23. The option to retain the two director model within Children's Services has been considered. However, since the consultation and finalising phase 1 of the senior management structure for Cheshire East Council, the work of the improvement and impact plan has identified the need for an additional permanent director within Children's Services. This new director post will ensure the dedicated focus on safeguarding and quality assurance as well children's commissioning to ensure that the improvement journey and its positive impact for the children of Cheshire East is delivered and embedded at pace.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

24. The proposal for a new Director role will need to be subject to full consultation with affected staff and unions before any final decision is made to implement the senior management structure. Consultation should be in line with the Council's policies regarding organisational change and restructures.
25. It is noted that, subject to consultation, the post will be added to the new Children's Services senior management structure.
26. Any new posts with a proposed salary of £100,000 or more will need to be approved by Full Council, in accordance with the Constitution and the Council's Pay Policy Statement.
27. Recruitment must be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution. The recruitment must also comply with the Employment Procedure Rules as well as appropriate HR policies and Procedures.
28. All appointments as part of the senior management restructure must be in accordance with the budget and pay policy statement.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

29. There is an additional cost to the introduction of this additional director post as outlined in Appendix 3. The additional costs of this post will be built into the Medium-Term financial planning to reflect the needs of the service.

Policy

30. There are no direct equality implications.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

31. There are no direct equality implications.
32. An equality impact assessment will be conducted as part of the preparation for the restructure consultation in line with HR policy.

Human Resources

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

Risk Management

34. All recruitment and structure changes will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's approved employment policies.

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. The proposals are to re-shape and re-focus the support to children, families, schools and settings to drive improved outcomes for our children. The proposed introduction of strategic expertise to commissioning, quality and partnerships will provide dedicated focus on this work. This will improve the experience for children and families.

Public Health

37. There are no direct implications for public health.

Climate Change

38. There are no direct implications for climate change.

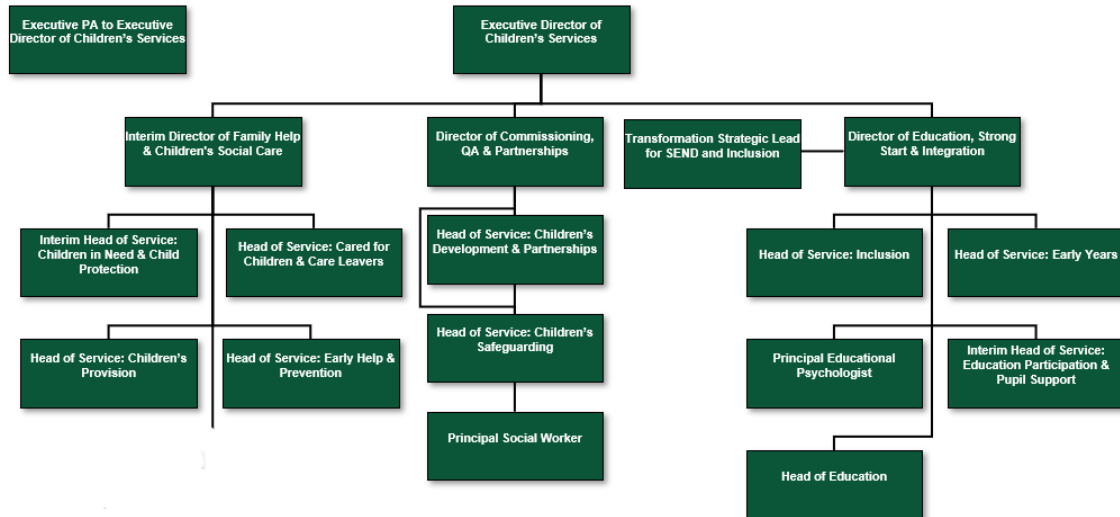
Access to Information

Contact Officer:	Sara Duncalf, Head of HR sara.duncalf@ cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Children’s Services Senior Management Structure Chart Appendix 2 – Job description for the post of Director of Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships. Appendix 3 – Financial Information
Background Papers:	None

Proposed Senior Management Structure

Children and Families Senior Leadership Team

6 November 24



Job Description and Specification

Job Title:	Director of Children’s Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships
Reference:	CEDR2007
Service:	Children & Families Directorate
Grade:	D
Reports to:	Executive Director – Children & Families
Location:	Delamere House, Crewe with travel to Macclesfield Town Hall and other locations within Cheshire East.
DBS Check:	Enhanced with Child Barred List

Your job

The main purpose of this post is to strategically lead, develop, influence and deliver high quality early years, education and skills services and opportunities across the borough to achieve good or better outcomes for children and young people, promoting an inclusive and aspirational culture.

This role is a member of the children and families’ senior leadership team contributing proactively to directorate strategy and playing a key role in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families through the strategic leadership and delivery of integrated commissioning, Quality Assurance and Children’s development and Partnerships. It will work collaboratively with internal and external partners and will lead the strategy for resident’s involvement and drive innovation in the provision of services that meet resident’s needs using data and evidence to drive commissioning and transformation activity.

It will use clear and visible leadership skills to develop the vision for modern, cost-effective child-focused children’s services, with a focus on supporting those most in need of support, to ensure that children, young people, and their families receive the highest quality of provision at the optimum cost.

In this job you will

1. Lead an integrated commissioning service for children in partnership with key agencies to improve outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.
2. Provide strategic leadership to the multi-agency children's safeguarding partnership driving the delivery of high-quality safeguarding and quality assurance services to children and families in Cheshire East.
3. To provide strategic leadership on arrangements for statutory inspection, inspections events and external challenge and scrutiny, including liaison with inspectors, partner agencies and service users.
4. To provide strategic leadership on service improvement initiatives within Children and Families, including managing, supporting and coordinating the activities of the Council's Children's Improvement Board.
5. Strategic lead for the research, co-ordination, development and implementation of Children and Families policies, procedures, practices and guidance, (consulting and negotiating as appropriate) to meet organisational and legislative requirements and improve practice.
6. Lead for children's services on cross directorate transformational ambitions and activities.
7. Work to align practice in service commissioning, in support of delivery of ambitious health and social care arrangements, with strong integration of care and health service.
8. Ensure that all directorate commissioned and contracted services are procured and delivered within budget, council and national policies and frameworks, and that the council's statutory duties regarding education and children's services delivered through commissioned services are effectively met.
9. Deliver innovative approaches to the development of directorate service commissioning, market shaping and quality assurance, and develop productive relationships with partners, providers and the local community, to deliver services focused on resident's assessed needs.
10. Lead on directorate supplier relationship management and market development, working in collaboration with service leads to ensure the fit between needs, outcomes and provision, to develop a comprehensive insight into the key markets to inform market development and supplier relationship management.
11. Work closely with the council's and ICB's information, data and performance and public health teams to develop commissioning priorities for the directorate using information and data to develop innovative approaches to managing demand and preparing for future needs.

12. Drive the use of integrated and preventative commissioned and contracted services that demonstrate a measurable decrease in the number of people accessing intensive, high cost, long-term services and institutional care.
13. Work with the council's procurement team to establish robust and sustainable arrangements for the tendering and performance management for suppliers and contracts and ensure that providers are challenged to deliver year on year improvements to quality and outcomes. Champion the interests of parents, families and vulnerable children and young people across all related services. Across the directorate, lead, and coordinate user involvement to increase opportunities for the voice and views of parents, carers, children and young people to inform and shape services and support.
14. Drive a customer service ethos which delivers high standards of customer care in responding to customer comments and complaints, and the use of this information to inform and improve service delivery.
15. Build capacity and flexibility in the services managed to respond to the findings of service inspections, legislative changes and national policy developments to support improvement.
16. Work closely with the Executive Director of Children and Families (DCS) and the 2 other directors to ensure that the statutory obligations of the DCS and the service in relation to children's services are fully discharged.
17. Lead a professional team providing effective management and development of staff and a clear vision and direction for all.
18. Evidence of developing and delivering innovation within challenging environments. Able to build a shared vision, develop partnerships, resolve complex problems and facilitate change sensitively.

From time to time you may be asked to undertake work as may be determined by the Chief Executive and/or an Executive Director. This will be up to or at a level that is consistent with your job role. This supports our joint commitment in our employee deal to work together as one team and one council to deliver the best service for our customers and communities.

In this job you will need

Education, training, and work qualifications:

- High calibre degree or equivalent level qualification or ability to demonstrate intellectual ability of a significant level.
- A relevant professional qualification
- Evidence of continued professional, managerial, and personal development in relevant professional area.

Knowledge:

- Knowledge of the issues facing local government and the wider economy and how they impact relevant service areas.
- Up to date professional knowledge base of the key areas relevant to the role and deep insight into the relationship between different fields.
- Awareness of the legislation and guidance relevant to the role and the implications that changes to legislation may have, including Inspection Regulations and what it means to be Inspection ready.

Skills and abilities:

- Ability to balance strategic leadership and direction with effective operational management.
- Ability to foster an open and trusting culture with the ability to lead change through others and inspire high levels of performance.
- Outstanding relationship management and networking skills, and the ability to foster joint working across service boundaries.
- Excellent analytical thinker able to apply a significant degree of evaluative judgement and provide practical and creative solutions.

- Able to identify economic, market and customer issues and use these to promote innovative business models, commercial partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value.
- Political sensitivity with an ability to make progress in complex policy areas and a strong belief in the value of local democracy and accountability.
- Commitment to Cheshire East Council's values and behaviours and equal opportunity policy, with an ability to demonstrate personal leadership on the importance of diversity.

Relevant experience:

- Substantial experience, evidenced by a solid track record of success, leading a significant organisational function or service in a complex environment. Evidence of experience as a senior manager of social work services with a broad background in children's services and a track record of successfully delivering service improvement.
- Strong track record of partnership building and driving value for money.

Our culture

For us, it is not just about our achievements as an organisation, but about how we do it. At Cheshire East Council we are working for a brighter future together –

- **We have a shared purpose**
- **We are supported and well led**
- **We are treated fairly and highly valued**
- **We succeed together**

This is all underpinned in our employee deal and everyone is expected to uphold their commitments by living by our values and demonstrating our behaviours.

Our values

Flexibility: adaptable, open to learning and resilient

Innovation: creative, challenges convention and always looks to improve

Responsibility: delivers on promises, efficient and has integrity

Service: listens, delivers quality, is reliable and enables others

Teamwork: respectful, inclusive and contributes at all levels

Employee deal

Our COMMITMENT

Shared purpose

- Provide a safe and positive working environment
- Setting clear performance objectives with realistic timescales for delivery
- Having fair and efficient policies and procedures in place and applying them consistently
- Listen, respond and act appropriately when you tell us about something that is inappropriate or wrong

Well led

- Provide honest, respectful and responsible leadership
- Be fair, consistent and timely in our decision making
- Work with you, enabling you to do your best work every day with the right resources, tools and technology

Valued people

- Have regular, useful team meetings, keep you informed and provide an opportunity for everyone to share their views
- Treat you as individuals, be respectful, flexible and supportive
- Care for your health and well-being
- Provide you with regular, meaningful and constructive feedback on your performance through one-to-ones and performance review meetings

Succeeding together

Your COMMITMENT

Shared purpose

- Bring a positive and can-do attitude into work
- Be proactive and always responsive to our customers and communities
- Work responsibly and ask for help if you need it
- Tell us if you see or experience anything that is inappropriate or wrong

Well led

- Be honest and reliable
- Get involved, keep informed, make suggestions and share your ideas
- Embrace technology and new ways of working

Valued people

- Participate fully and make helpful contributions to team meetings
- Be respectful of others and work flexibly and collaboratively with colleagues and partners
- Care for your health and well-being enabling you to maximise your attendance at work
- Value helpful constructive feedback and act upon it

Succeeding together

- Offer you opportunities for learning and developing
- Recognise and value your hard work and contribution
- Work together as one team and one council to deliver the best service for our customers and communities
- Take the opportunity to learn and develop
- Be supportive and appreciate others
- Work together as one team and one council to deliver the best service for our customers and communities

Working for a brighter future together



APPENDIX 3

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SENIOR MANAGER STRUCTURE COSTS – CURRENT AND PROPOSED

Job Title	Budgeted Structure (2024/25)	Assumed grade	Cost of Current Structure with on-costs (24/25)	Cost of Proposed Structure with on-costs (24/25)
Executive Director Children's Services (Existing)	£198,161.00	CX3	£198,161.00	£198,161.00
Director for Education, Strong Start & Integration (Existing)	£135,260.00	D1a	£160,321.00	£160,321.00
Director of Family Help & Children's Social Care (Existing)	£135,260.00	D3	£135,260.00	£135,260.00
Director of Commissioning, Quality Assurance and Partnerships (Proposed new role)	£0.00	D3	£0.00	£135,260.00
Total Amount	£468,681.00		£493,742.00	£629,002.00