

PROPOSAL FOR THE APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF CHIEF OFFICER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND CONFIRMATION OF THE POST OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF IMPROVEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND COUNTY SOLICITOR

Recommendation: that the Committee:

- (a) endorse the proposal to commence recruitment to the permanent appointment for the post of Chief Officer for Children's Services; and
- (b) endorse the interim appointment of Vivien Lines as Improvement Director within Children's Social Care until March 2022.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current Chief Officer for Children's Services, Jo Olsson, commenced with Devon as an interim in March 2016 and took up a permanent position in the role in 2017. In July 2020 the authority was informed of the post holder's decision to retire in January 2021.
- 1.2 The Chief Officer post holds responsibility for the following key service areas within Devon County Council:
 - Children's Social Care
 - Education & Learning
 - Children's Commissioning
 - Public Health Nursing
- 1.3 The service area is facing a rapid improvement journey following the outcome of an ILACS inspection in early 2020 that deemed the service Inadequate.
- 1.4 The improvements required within Children's Social Care must be sustained and the new appointment will need to continue to ensure that the service works towards a 'good' outcome in the next stage of the Improvement process.

2. Chief Officer for Children's Services

- 2.2 It is proposed that the vacancy will be recruited to on a permanent basis at its current L1 salary level of £137,965 (subject to April 2020 pay award negotiations)
- 2.3 A robust recruitment process will be used to provide assurance of the expertise, knowledge and skills required for the post of Chief Officer for Children's Services.
- 2.4 The recruitment process will ensure that the new Chief Officer for Children's Services demonstrates the leadership behaviours identified as part of the 'Doing What Matters' activity within Devon County Council.
- 2.5 The recruitment process would commence following the necessary approval process to ensure a replacement is identified and time for suitable handover periods are achieved.
- 2.6 The proposal to recruit a direct replacement has support from Eleanor Brazil, Devon County Councils appointed Children's Commissioner.

2.7 It is acknowledged that this replacement will commence close to the local elections in May 2021. In light of this it is felt that that this permanent appointment is necessary following the recent Ofsted outcome and the need to provide stability of leadership for Children's services.

3. Interim Improvement Director

3.1 On the 6th April 2020 the Council appointed an Interim Improvement Lead within Children's Social Care. As this is an interim appointment the Chief Executive is authorised to make this decision.

3.2 The interim Improvement Director's task is to oversee the development and delivery of the Children's Services Improvement Plan to ensure improvements in the 4 key strands of improvement as identified following the OFSTED inspection.

3.3 The interim postholder who reports to the Chief Officer will maintain oversight on the 4 key identified areas of improvement that are:

- Experiences of and progress for Care Leavers
- Experiences of and progress for Looked After Children
- Children at risk of chronic neglect and emotional abuse
- The impact of leaders and managers on social work practice for children and families

3.4 The successful interim candidate, Vivien Lines, has a range of skills and experience and a track record of delivery in a post at this level which will enable Devon to deliver the service improvement agenda.

3.5 The interim placement costs £1,100 per day. The post is deemed as inside IR35 and as such an additional cost for NI and Apprenticeship Levy is charged in addition.

3.6 The committee is asked to note and endorse the appointment for the period until March 2022.

4. Conclusion

4.1 It is recommended that the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee endorse the proposal to advertise for a permanent replacement for the Chief Officer for Children's Services

4.2 It is recommended that Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee endorse the appointment of the Interim Improvement Director post to March 2022.

Phil Norrey, Chief Executive & Jan Shadbolt, County Solicitor

Electoral Divisions: All

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