

Appointment to the posts of the Director of Transformation & Business Services and Director of People and Culture

Recommendation

1. That the Committee agree to amend the remit of the Director of Transformation, Performance & Resources to remove HR and rename to Director of Transformation & Business Services
2. Replace the role of Head of HR with a Director of People and Culture post that will be part of the Senior Leadership Team

Background

New leadership arrangements at Devon County Council, detailed in the Appointments and Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee paper (19th January 2022), created a new post of Director of Transformation, Performance & Resources. This encompassed the existing remits of the Head of Digital, Transformation & Business Support, Head of HR and Head of Organisational Change.

The role was advertised externally in April 2022 with the support of an external Executive Search Agency, Tile Hill. Four candidates were taken forward to the Stage 1 assessment process conducted by members of Senior Leadership Team. Unfortunately, no candidates were successful at the Stage 1 process held in early June 2022 to progress to Stage 2 with the Appointments & Remuneration Committee.

Feedback from the agency at the time was that, due to the substantial remit of the role, and the current recruitment climate, the role would need to offer substantially higher remuneration in order to successfully recruit a candidate of the calibre required for an organisation of Devon County Council's size and complexity.

The post was not re-advertised immediately at the time pending a review of the remit and salary of the post. The Chief Executive at the time, Phil Norrey, announced his retirement shortly after, and recruitment to the post was paused until a new Chief Executive was in place and could review the arrangements.

Review findings

Having been in post officially since 17 February 2023, and having also undertaken several weeks working in the organisation throughout December and January, the Chief Executive has considered options in relation to the remit of this post.

The recruitment market has become more challenging. This has been borne out in recent Director level recruitment processes. For example the Director of Children's & Young People's Futures, where, despite adding a £20,000 market supplement we were unable to attract the calibre of candidate required to shortlist any candidate to

the Stage 1 assessment. Also for the recruitment to the Deputy Director of Children's Social Care, a market supplement of £20,000 had to be offered to successfully recruit.

Furthermore, the new Chief Executive's assessment of the current situation within DCC, is that there needs to be a renewed focus on workforce. The current challenges within Children's Services clearly show the need to address sizeable cultural issues amongst staff, which are manifesting in a large number of operational HR cases and staff leaving the organisation; both of which create instability for staff.

Multiple visits have been undertaken to engage with staff across all office bases over the last month by members of the Senior Leadership Team. These have identified that there are pockets of staff related cultural issues that require focus and investment to address. These have highlighted that recent changes at Senior Leadership level have also been unsettling for staff and feedback from the Department for Education has also raised the urgent need to create stability at Senior Leadership Team level.

Prior to the organisation restructure in 2011, the Head of HR reported directly to the Chief Executive and was part of the Senior Leadership team on an L3 grade. However, following the restructure, the role was made redundant, and the Head of HR has reported into a Director rather than being directly part of the Senior Leadership Team. Since August 2022, the Head of HR has on an interim basis been part of the Senior Leadership team. This has enabled workforce matters to be considered at the outset of any new discussions at strategic level.

A key priority is to deliver a new People Strategy for DCC to Full Council on 25 May 2023 in order to corporately renew the focus on our staff, who are the greatest asset of the Council.

The strategic and operational demands from a workforce perspective are considerable and removing them from the scope of the Director of Transformation & Business Services to sit within its own Directorate, would support the renewed focus on staff, as well as create a more appropriately sized remit to enable successful recruitment to the post.

Process

In line with the 8 Point Plan currently in place to support financial sustainability, all vacant established roles must consider internal staff resource in the first instance.

It is proposed that the Director of Transformation & Business Services post to be advertised internally as soon as possible in order to provide greater stability at Senior Leadership Team level.

It is also recommended that the current role of Head of HR is replaced by a Director of People and Culture role. The current post holder would be put at risk of redundancy and ring-fenced for the new role, meaning that they will have the opportunity to interview for the role prior to it needing to be advertised further.

The revised Job Descriptions for the Director of Transformation & Business Services and the Director of People and Culture are attached for reference.

Donna Manson
Chief Executive

*Contact for Enquiries: Maria Price, Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Tel No: 01392 385546 Room: G26*