

## Employment Committee 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

<b>Report Title</b>	Selection and Appointment for Executive Director of Children’s Services
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<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	Not applicable
<b>Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? <a href="#">Our priorities for the future   North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)</a></b>	Active, fulfilled lives

### List of Appendices

**Appendix A – Job Description – Executive Director of Children’s Services**  
**Appendix B – Draft timetable (may be subject to change)**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. This report recommends the appointment of a sub-committee to undertake the selection and recruitment of the Executive Director of Children’s Services role/ DCS statutory designation; in accordance with the council’s constitution.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The Executive Director of Children’s Services (DCS) is vital in making a real difference to the lives of the children and young people across North Northamptonshire.
- 2.2 The former Executive Director for Children’s Services (DCS) resigned in October 2023; and the vacant DCS statutory designation is being covered on a temporary basis by the Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS).
- 2.3 The new Chief Executive is now keen to progress the permanent recruitment

of a suitably qualified and experienced candidate to support the delivery of excellent children's services and the council's corporate plan.

- 2.4 This report recommends the appointment of a sub-committee to undertake the recruitment and selection of this senior, statutory role.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Employment Committee:

- a) Establishes a politically balanced Subcommittee consisting of six elected members to interview and appoint to the position of Executive Director of Children's Services, ensuring that at least one Executive Member is on the Subcommittee;
- b) Agrees that membership of the Subcommittee shall consist of four Conservative Group members, one Labour Group Member and 1 Green Alliance Group member;
- c) Delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Human Resources in consultation with members of the established sub-committee, to longlist and shortlist suitably qualified applicants;
- d) Delegates authority to the Subcommittee to:
  - Appoint the most suitable person for the position.
- e) Agree that the following stakeholder panels will be established to provide feedback to the Subcommittee
  - a. Member Panel comprising of members who are not part of the Main interview Panel;
  - b. Partner Stakeholder Panel comprising Children's Board, Children's Trust, Local Safeguarding Board and Local Children's Charities;
  - c. A Children's and Young People's stakeholder group; and
  - d. Corporate Leadership Team Panel.
- f) Note that the assessment process will include psychometric tests; a technical interview and leadership scenario to inform the Sub Committee.

#### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.2 These recommendations have been made in ensure to ensure that a comprehensive, inclusive and thorough recruitment and selection process is undertaken, in accordance with the constitution, to ensure that the right candidates are selected for this senior role.

#### **Alternative Options Considered**

- 3.3 The role of Executive Director for Children's Services is critical for the Council and is a statutory appointment which is required to be filled.

- 3.4 Instead of establishing a Sub Committee, the Employment Committee could undertake the appointment process. This is not the recommended action as a Sub Committee will enable a more in-depth interview process, ensuring the right candidate for North Northamptonshire.

## **4 Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Executive Director of Children's Services is a statutory role /designation, responsible for securing the provision of services which address the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers.
- 4.2 The previous NNC Executive Director of Children's Services (DCS) left the council in October 2023, to take up a new position with a different local authority. The Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS) is covering the vacant statutory designation on a temporary basis at this time, pending permanent recruitment to the role.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive, who took up office on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024, is keen to progress the permanent recruitment of a suitably qualified and experienced candidate to deliver excellent children's services; ensuring all our young people are cared for and given the tools and opportunities to flourish and reach their full potential. The role will also be vital in delivering a bold and prosperous future for North Northamptonshire, working closely with the corporate leadership team to make the council the best that it can be.
- 4.4 Following a thorough tender process, Penna has been appointed as the council's executive search partner and a national online recruitment campaign is planned for late February 2024.
- 4.5 In accordance with the Constitution, the Employment Committee is able to discharge its functions through a sub-committee (referred to in this report as the interview panel). As is the case with the committee itself, the interview panel will be subject to the requirements relating to political balance and must include at least one member of the Executive.

## **5 Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Whilst the Employment Committee could undertake the interviewing and appointment of a preferred candidate, it is recommended that a sub-committee, comprising 6 members, is formed to undertake this process. The Subcommittee will:
- a) Be consulted on the longlisting and shortlisting of candidates and will conduct the interviews
  - b) Following the interviews, come to a view on the most suitable person for the position and advise the supporting HR team of:
    - i. the name of the person in question; and

- ii. any other particulars which the sub-committee consider are relevant to the appointment in accordance with the requirements set out in the Constitution.

5.2 It is proposed that the following panels will form part of the interview process:

- Interview Panel made up of 6 members (representative of the political balance of the Council) and includes the Executive portfolio holder for Children's, Families, Education & Skills.
- Member Panel comprising of members who are not part of the Main interview Panel.
- Partner Stakeholder Panel comprising Children's Board, Children's Trust, Local Safeguarding Board and Local Children's Charities.
- A Children's and Young People's stakeholder group; and
- CLT Panel.

5.3 It is proposed that Technical interviews and Psychometric testing will also be undertaken as part of the selection process; and that the long/short listing meetings will take place remotely via video conferencing.

5.4 Candidates will be asked to provide a video about themselves and what they can bring to the role, following the long listing stage. The Leader and Chief Executive will also meet with all shortlisted candidates.

5.5 It is proposed that the final interview takes place in person at The Cube in Corby.

## **6 Next Steps**

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6.1 The recruitment campaign, including national and online adverts will commence in late February 2024. Thereafter, following a period of long listing and shortlisting, in consultation with the Subcommittee, the Subcommittee (as the interview panel) will interview shortlisted candidates and appoint, as appropriate, a successful candidate.

## **7 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1 Resources are required in terms of a time commitment from members to participate in the long/short listing meetings and the interview panels. A draft of proposed key dates is included in Appendix B.

7.1.2 There are no additional financial implications arising from the proposal to appoint the sub-committee.

## **7.2 Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1 The council must ensure that appointment of statutory roles are managed in accordance with the Constitution. The recommendations proposed in this report will ensure that the correct process is followed.
- 7.2.2 In accordance with the local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England) Regulations 2001 (and as referenced in section 4 of Part 9.5 – Officer Employment Procedure Rules of the Constitution, an offer of appointment in relation to the relevant chief officer/s, may not be made until members of the Executive have been notified of the proposed appointment and within a required period of time, no material or well-founded objection has been received by the Proper Officer.

## **7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans**

- 7.3.1 Appointment to Executive Director of Children’s Services will support the Council’s Corporate Plan 2021-25 and the key principle plans and polices of the Council.

## **7.4 Risk**

- 7.4.1 There is a risk of challenge to the process if the correct procedure is not followed.
- 7.4.2 There is a risk to the council if a thorough selection and recruitment process is not undertaken which could result in either the wrong candidate being recruited, or no successful applicant appointed.
- 7.4.3 There are no further risks to consider arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

## **7.5 Consultation**

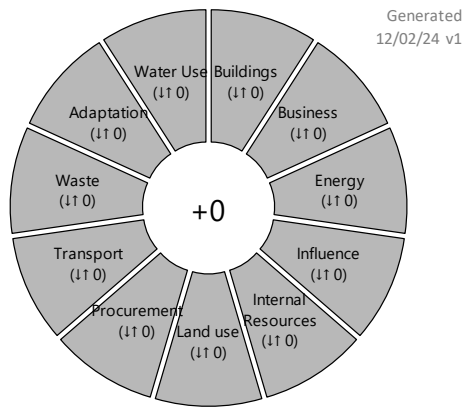
- 7.5.1 None required

## **7.6 Equality Implications**

- 7.6.1 A fair and transparent process will be undertaken, in accordance with the Council’s values and behaviours and diversity and inclusion policies.

## **7.7 Climate Impact**

- 7.7.1 There are no specific climate impacts arising from this report.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 10 mos away.

## 7.8 Community Impact

7.8.1 There are no specific community impacts arising from this report.

## 7.9 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.9.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## 8 Background Papers

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8.1 Constitution of North Northamptonshire Council ([link to website](#))