

SENIOR OFFICER AND APPOINTMENTS STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

25 March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHIEF OFFICER STRUCTURE UPDATE REPORT
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report:

- Updates Members on the arrangements in hand to appoint an interim Director to the post of Director of Regeneration and Place pending a permanent recruitment.
- Seeks permission to recruit a permanent staff member to the position of Director of Regeneration and Place following retirement.
- Seeks Member approval to the recruitment timetable; and
- Details the current Chief Officer Structure, including all 'Chief Officer' and 'Deputy Chief Officer' roles as defined by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

This matter affects all wards in the borough.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Senior Officer and Appointments Staffing Sub-Committee is requested to:

1. Note the arrangements in hand to appoint an interim Director of Regeneration and Place as set out in section 4 of this report.
2. Note the Chief Executive intent to proceed with recruiting a permanent staff member to the position of Director of Regeneration and Place.
3. Consider the options set out in Appendix one in relation to the permanent recruitment for the Director of Regeneration and Place and indicate any preferred option.
4. Note the intention for a further report to be brought to this Committee in July 2025 with a further update.
5. Note that the Council's Chief Officer Structure will be listed in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution as defined by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011: this includes all 'Chief Officer' and 'Deputy Chief Officer' roles.
6. Note that the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service has delegated authority to amend the Chief Officer Structure at Deputy Chief Officer level (Assistant Director) in year to support the effective delivery of Council plans.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Chief Executive is making this recommendation in response to a retirement at senior level. It is recognised that, given the significance of the role, immediate leadership is required to provide continuity, strategic oversight and corporate grip of all major development projects and schemes across the directorate during a significant period of delivery. This will be sought from an experienced, credible interim with significant experience of working within local government at director level, leading programmes of work with similar scale and complexity.
- 1.2 Given the significance of the role, permanent recruitment will take place. The intention is to advertise internally and externally to test the market and attract the widest possible pool of applicants.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive is committed to ensuring this committee is kept updated on the Council's Chief Officer structure.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not to recruit to the post of Director: Regeneration and Place; however, this role is vital for the delivery of the Council's significant ambitions and plans in this area, linked to the delivery of the Council Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's plans for regeneration for the borough present a once in a generation opportunity for change. The borough is now leading one of the largest regeneration programmes in the country.
- 3.2 The Council has developed the Birkenhead 2040 Framework which sets out a comprehensive strategy for the regeneration of Birkenhead. Based on the proposals of the Framework, the strategy of the new Local Plan is to deliver all of the Borough's housing needs within existing urban areas, with a particular focus on the use of brownfield sites in Birkenhead. It sets out the spatial blueprint for the area, defining the vision and delivery of a sustainable, green, waterfront 'city' in Birkenhead. It includes delivering exciting programmes in New Brighton, Liscard, New Ferry and Bromborough. The ambitious regeneration programme also includes new commercial and residential developments, which maximise the opportunities from a property perspective. The programmes of work are enabled through the development and implementation of new policies and strategies including the Public Realm Strategy and Design Guide for Birkenhead, a Parking Strategy, a Culture and Heritage Strategy, and a Land Assembly strategy.
- 3.3 The Council is committed to delivering a long-term vision for regeneration, which benefits communities across the borough. A vision, supported by key partnerships including Homes England, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the

Wirral Growth Company, with focus on delivering spaces that change the way our residents live and work.

- 3.4 In May 2022, Council agreed changes to the Constitution which delegated the responsibility for appointment of Deputy Chief Officers (Assistant Director level roles) to the Head of Paid Service. Roles at Assistant Director level are key to ensuring effective leadership of Council services and functions and advice to Elected Members at the relevant committees.

4.0 Director of Regeneration & Place

- 4.1 The Director of Regeneration and Place will be retiring on 30 April 2024.
- 4.2 It is necessary for this key role to be filled immediately to ensure there is senior management capacity and capability in place for the Council to deliver its ambitious regeneration plans. Interim cover is therefore required from May 2024 to provide stability to the regeneration directorate during a significant period of delivery.
- 4.3 Outlined below are options relating to the commencement date for the permanent recruitment.

Option 1:

- 4.4 To commence the recruitment process immediately, advertising by the end of March 2024. This would mean interim cover for a period of up to 6 months with a newly appointed permanent director expected to start late September, subject to notice period.
- 4.5 There are some risks associated with the short-term nature of the interim assignment including limited time to drive the key programmes of work and schemes across the regeneration directorate. In addition, given the length of tenure across the tier below, a shorter assignment period may not allow enough time for the teams and services to benefit from strong leadership and stability.

Options 2 and 3:

- 4.6 To delay the commencement of the recruitment process, advertising later in October 2024 or January 2025 for example. This would mean interim cover for a period of up to 18 months with a newly appointed permanent director expected to start by Spring or Summer 2025.
- 4.7 The longer period of time would allow the interim to drive some of the key deliverables across the regeneration agenda, establishing strategic oversight and corporate grip. The interim would provide leadership across the regeneration and place directorate, ensuring that teams have the support, structure and capacity to deliver, providing stability until the newly appointed permanent director took up post. In addition, the interim can support the development of the tier below in line with the Council's ambition to retain and grow experienced and skilled professionals who

possess organisational knowledge, and who are capable of handling the multifaceted challenges faced by a complex organisation. This approach forms part of the Council's Talent Strategy: developing and retaining the right calibre of talent and recognising and rewarding achievements.

- 4.8 Appendix one outlines the possible recruitment timescales for the options above.
- 4.9 Interim cover at this level is required immediately, irrespective of recruitment commencing late March or later. The approach to commence recruitment later will ensure that consistent leadership and service stability is achieved during a significant delivery period within the Regeneration directorate.
- 4.10 Benchmarking data indicates that the level of grade for this post is competitive. Therefore, it is recommended to commence the recruitment process at the current grades of D1.
- 4.11 Given, the significance of the role, the intention is to advertise both internally and externally to test the market and attract the widest possible pool of applicants.
- 4.12 The job description is in the process of being reviewed. The current job description and is attached at Appendix two.

5.0 Chief Officer Structure

- 5.1 The current Chief Officer structure and functional alignment can be seen in Appendix three.
- 5.2 The Council's Chief Officer Structure, and Heads of Services are listed in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution as defined by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011. 'Chief Officer' and 'Deputy Chief Officer' are officers of the Council as defined by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and as listed in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution. For completeness, Heads of Service roles have been identified and included in the structure.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service will, as necessary, review the roles and responsibilities at Assistant Director level to ensure that there is senior management capacity and capability in place for the Council to deliver its plans. The Chief Executive will consider how services across all directorates are resourced, taking account of the range of change programmes, projects and service reviews to ensure a balanced medium term financial strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The costs relating to the recruitment plan and activity will be met within existing budgets.

- 6.2 The interim costs will vary depending on the length of the assignment. Approximate costs for an experienced, high calibre interim at this level is approximately £100,000 per 6-month period.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council will ensure that all recruitment is undertaken in accordance with Employment Procedure Rules, relevant policies and meets its obligations under employment law.
- 7.2 Section 7 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that all local authority staff are to be appointed on merit. Part 4 section 7 of the Council's Constitution, the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, sets out the process of appointment for chief and deputy chief officers.
- 7.3 The Council's Chief Officer Structure will be listed in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution as defined by Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 8.1 The recruitment activity detailed within this report will be met within existing budgets and delivered within existing resources. The costs associated with the interim role are detailed within the financial implication section above.
- 8.2 The recruitment process will be managed in house. However, in line with established practice the Council will engage Executive Search consultants to undertake search activity for the Director role. These costs will be met from existing budgets.

9.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 9.1 There are risks to the Council if it does not have the appropriate capability within the senior team to deliver its plans.
- 9.2 There are always risks arising from the recruitment process and the job market is very competitive as this time. The Council's HR/OD Team will ensure that the permanent role is advertised to as wide an audience as possible and will engage with search consultants to promote the opportunities to potential candidates.

10.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Trade Unions have been informed of the content of the report.

11.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Council will ensure that the recruitment process for both interim and permanent recruitment is undertaken fairly in accordance with policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

12.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of greenhouse gases.

12.2 The Job Description includes the expectation of corporate Directors to lead and promote the Council's agenda in relation to climate change.

13.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no community wealth building implications arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Provisional Recruitment Timetable
Appendix 2	Director: Regeneration & Place Current Job Description
Appendix 3	Current Chief Officer structure

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Birkenhead 2040 Framework

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Senior Officer and Appointments Staffing Sub-Committee	5 December 2023
Senior Officer and Appointments Staffing Sub-Committee	28 July 2022
Senior Officer and Appointment Staffing Sub-Committee	15 December 2021