

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Urgent Business Committee |
| DATE | 1 July 2016 |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE | Angela Scott |
| TITLE OF REPORT | Chief Officer Posts |
| REPORT NUMBER | OCE/16/026 |
| CHECKLIST COMPLETED | Yes |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report deals with several matters relating to posts at chief officer level. The matters range from a proposed re-designation of the post of Director of Corporate Governance; role re-definition at Head of Service level; the continuation of a shared service arrangement and the commencement of a recruitment process for two second tier posts.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Approves the re-designation of the post of Director of Corporate Governance as Depute Chief Executive (Director of Corporate Governance)
- b)
 - i) Approves the re-designation of the post of Head of Planning and Sustainable Development as Head of City Planning and the removal of responsibility for 'protective services' from the post's portfolio of functions.
 - ii) Notes that authority has previously been granted in relation to the establishment of an Appointment Panel to progress recruitment and selection arrangements relevant to the post.
- c)
 - i) Approves the transfer of responsibility for 'protective services' functions to the Head of Communities and Housing
 - ii) Approves the establishment of an Appointment Panel comprising nine members in total (3+3+1+1+1) including the Convener of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee, to appoint to the post of Head of Communities and

Housing and to deal with all relevant matters pertaining to the recruitment and selection process concerned (e.g. the job profile).

- d) Notes that the tender process to source a recruitment partner for the Council is underway and likely to ensure that a suitable organisation will be available to assist the Council with the recruitment activity outlined in the report.
- e) Approves a six month extension for the current shared arrangement with Aberdeenshire Council for the post of Head of Education within Education and Children's Services.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implication arising from this report relates to running recruitment and selection processes for the vacant posts specified.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As has previously been reported to Finance, Policy and Resources Committee the Council is currently undertaking a procurement process to appoint executive recruitment consultants. The advert inviting tender submissions was published in May with the closing date for tenders to be received as 30 June 2016. Following this closing date Officers will review and evaluate the tenders and it is currently planned to award the contract around 16 July. Following the required 10-day stand-still period as part of the procurement regulations it is planned the new provider to be appointed.

If, however, some unforeseen situation impinges on this timescale and it is not possible to award the contract to commence on or around 1 August 2016, Regulation 3.10 of the new "Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council Procurement Regulations 2016" approved by Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June 2016 will be invoked. This enables the Chief Executive and the Head of Commercial & Procurement Services to suspend the Council's Procurement Regulations where there are special circumstances justifying the suspension. This would be to allow an external recruitment consultant to be appointed to assist with the imminent recruitment exercise of the 3 Chief Officer posts identified within this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 **Designation of the Post of Director of Corporate Governance**

Members will be aware that, despite assistance from recruitment consultants in both Scotland and England, the Council has not been

able to appoint a Director of Corporate Governance in three attempts to do so in the last eighteen months.

Whilst all directors occasionally deputise for myself in times of my non-availability, the portfolio of the Director of Corporate Governance is most closely aligned to the role of Head of Paid Service (having operational accountability for the key statutory functions of Finance and Legal).

With the foregoing in mind, it is proposed to redesignate the Director of Corporate Governance as: Depute Chief Executive (Director of Corporate Governance). In addition to providing a more accurate reflection of the role of the post, this redesignation may increase the likelihood of a successful conclusion when the Council advertises the post later this year.

5.2 Reallocation of functions at Head of Service level within Communities, Housing & Infrastructure

Within the Communities Housing and Infrastructure Directorate the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development has been vacant since September 2015 and is currently covered on an 'acting-up' basis. In addition, the Head of Communities and Housing has decided to retire and has submitted his notice to this effect. This will mean two key roles in the Directorate will soon be vacant.

5.2.1. Head of City Planning

Following an unsuccessful attempt to appoint to the post of Head of Planning and Sustainable Development in March 2016 the role has been reviewed. As a result of the review it is suggested that the portfolio of disciplines that are part of the Head of Service role should be rationalised. The proposal is to remove 'protective services' from the post's functional portfolio. This includes Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Aberdeen Scientific Services Laboratory (including Public Analyst function.) This is because experience over recent months has shown that the planning related aspects of the Head of Service role demand a high level of attention and this has resulted in a reduced level of engagement with the Protective Services staff.

It is also proposed to redesignate the role, changing it from Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to Head of City Planning. It is considered that this change may increase the appeal of the job as this title is increasingly being used elsewhere. The Head of City Planning role would be responsible for Planning Strategy and Policy, Sustainable Development, Masterplanning and Design, Conservation, Transportation Planning and major projects, Public Transportation Unit (PTU), Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), Building Standards, Greenspace strategy, Archaeological Services, Roads Programme and Development Management.

5.2.2 **Head of Communities and Housing**

It is proposed to re-align accountability for protective services to the post of Head of Communities and Housing. This change will strengthen many links already established with other functions within this service. This was evidenced during consultation with the staff group where an exercise was undertaken to 'map' which other teams within CH&I 'protective services' regularly work with and this informed the recommendation to which Head of Service these function should be aligned. Furthermore, it is believed that closer working relationships with teams will provide the opportunity for further service improvement.

It is also proposed to place the responsibility for emergency planning and resilience with the Head of Communities and Housing. The value of this will be a single service with oversight and leadership for community capacity building, community safety, and community and regional emergency planning and resilience.

5.3 **Extension of Joint Working arrangement within Education and Children Services**

A joint working arrangement has been in place across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils for the past 6 months with the Aberdeenshire Head of Service covering the vacant role of the Head of Education within Aberdeen City Council. Both Councils have benefitted from the joint working initiatives that the Officer concerned has taken forward during this time. Extending the arrangement for a further 6 months will allow these initiatives to become better embedded in the working arrangements of both Councils. The Scottish Government has several plans regarding the development of Education services. This fact, coupled with the formation of the Northern Alliance of Local Authorities who are facing the same challenges with respect to education services, suggests that joint working will be a key feature of Scottish education going forward, and extending the current arrangement will ensure that Aberdeen City is well prepared for this. This arrangement will be reviewed in light of local and national developments at the end of this extended period.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

Taking steps to fill key posts in the organisation will contribute to ensuring that 'customer experience' is maximised both internally and externally.

Improving Staff Experience –

Having vacant posts at Chief Officer level may adversely affect our ability to maximise staff engagement within the services concerned.

Improving our use of Resources –

The proposal to continue with a shared Head of Education post demonstrates an efficient use of our resources.

Corporate -

Effective corporate working depends on there being a full complement of Chief Officers, leading services and interacting effectively with one another. The resourcing aspects of this paper will enable that context to be achieved.

Public –

This report is unlikely to be of direct interest to the public.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is clearly an element of risk attached to situations where Chief Officer posts are left vacant for a prolonged period of time. Currently the risks are mitigated through an interim arrangement being in place for the Director of Corporate Governance. In addition there are acting up arrangements within Communities, Housing & Infrastructure to cover the vacant Head of Planning & Sustainable Development and Head of Communities and Housing.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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