

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL8 September 2021Report by Chief ExecutivePOST OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to put arrangements in place to ensure continuity and stability within the Corporate and Community Services department and seek Council approval for an Appointments Committee for the replacement of the Director of Corporate and Community Services post.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that the Council:
- (a) notes the retirement of the Director of Corporate and Community Services with effect from 30 January 2022;
  - (b) Approves the recruitment procedure as detailed
  - (c) Approves the redesignation of the post as Director of Business Operations and Partnerships including the consequent change of name of the Department to Business Operations and Partnerships
  - (d) notes that responsibility for deputising for the Chief Executive will now be shared across all the directors as required rather than vested in a single post.
  - (e) delegates to the Chief Executive to make the necessary arrangements;
  - (f) provide nominations to the Appointments Committee;
  - (g) authorises the Chief Executive to put in place appropriate interim management arrangements for the Department if required.

**BACKGROUND**

3. After 37 years of service to local government the Director of Corporate and Community Services/Deputy Chief Executive, Caroline Innes, has now intimated that she will retire with effect from 30 January 2022. This notice period will allow sufficient time for her successor to be identified through a recruitment procedure and for a well organised handover. The purpose of this paper is to agree the process for the recruitment of Ms Innes's successor.

**THE ROLE OF DIRECTOR**

4. Ms Innes's role has developed considerably since her appointment as Deputy Chief Executive in 2008. As well as her original responsibilities, on the retirement of the previous Director of Finance, the scope of the role was widened to include ICT, Council Tax and Benefits, Payroll, Creditors and Debtors.

5. The present scope of the role is:

Deputy Chief Executive

Leadership of Corporate and Community Services which includes:

- Human Resources
- Payroll
- ICT
- Data
- Communications
- Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable
- Council Tax Collection and Benefits Payments
- Customer First
- Money Advice and Rights
- Registrars
- Emergency Planning
- Community Safety (including CCTV, community wardens and out of hours response)
- Community Development including Young Persons Services and Equalities
- Committee and Member Services'
- Strategy, Policy, Best Value and Performance Measurement
- Business Change

6. The Department has gross expenditure of £36m and staffing levels of circa 300.

7. Given the changes in the role over a number of years, and as the Council plans for recovery from the impact of Coronavirus and moves towards renewal, it is appropriate to review the priorities of the post prior to advert to ensure the leadership skills required can be clearly articulated in the recruitment materials.

8. The 3 priorities identified are:

Efficient and effective business operations

9. The business processes, which are common across departments, must be organised in such a way as to maximise economies of scale and the use of digital technology, with the aim of making the processes as effective and efficient as possible. At the same time, an absolute focus on the needs of the customer must be maintained, whether it is an internal department or the residents we serve. Broadly speaking these processes are

- Income receipts – council tax and payments for chargeable services
- Payments – benefits, payroll, the payment of invoices etc.
- The management of ICT and data
- Human resource management
- Customer contact and communication through telephone, contact centre, digital channels or press for high volume services.
- Customer contact at a time of crisis for example at times of bereavement, financial hardship or illness

10. In terms of staff and budgets, business operations are the most significant part of the department.

### Council Wide Digital Transformation

11. Across the Council, we are working to increase the pace and scale of digital transformation to meet the needs of residents and to improve productivity. As we learn from the implementation of our Core Systems and Digital Customer Experience projects, we will build a structured collaborative approach to implementing new Digital systems across the council. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 Cabinet agreed that the focus would be on:

- Digital Business systems and processes
- Digital Customer experience
- Digital Workforce Productivity

12. These projects will be developed by cross council teams utilising a core group of experts who will transfer their skills from project to project as required.

### Effective Community, Partnership and Strategy Development

13. We need to ensure that we take a long term perspective on delivering the best possible future for the East Renfrewshire area, which addresses the impact of Coronavirus on our most vulnerable residents, the opportunities of a digital world and the impact of climate change, all at a time of financial pressure. Our work on “Vision for the Future”, completed just prior to the pandemic, provides a solid foundation and has been complemented by the fantastic partnerships with communities and other public sector partners during the pandemic. Community Planning, participatory budgeting, community empowerment as well as robust evaluation of the effectiveness of our work will all contribute to ensuring that we are delivering the best possible services to our residents. This work will be crucial in advising Council and the Corporate Management Team.

14. All 3 priorities reflect the cross council enabling role of the department.

15. The existing designation of the role i.e. Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate and Community Services does not fully reflect the way the role has developed over the years. It is recommended that the role be redesignated as Director of Business Operations and Partnerships, with the name of the department amended to match. The role of deputising for the Chief Executive will be shared across the Directors as required, further building the sense of shared leadership across the Council.

16. Once a new Director is appointed, and after consultation with the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team, a further report may be brought to Council if further approvals are required to ensure that the priorities can be delivered within a very challenging financial situation for the Council.

### **RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE**

17. In view of the timing of the Director’s departure it is proposed that the Appointments Committee be established to recruit a new Director.

18. The following is the proposed timetable for the appointment to the post:

- Post advertised: 17 September 2021 ( or as soon as possible after that date)
- Closing date: 10 October 2021
- Shortlisting by Interview Committee: 14 October 2021
- Shortlist by Assessment Centre: 20-21 October 2021
- Interview date: 09 November 2021

19. An Appointments Committee, comprising 5 Elected Members, should be established to shortlist and interview candidates, and to make an appointment to the post. If for any reason a member of the Appointments Committee is unable to attend then the appointment of a substitute will be made.

20. The assessment centre will focus on ensuring the candidates have the correct skills mix to be considered for appointment by the Committee.

21. If for any reason a successor is not in place by January 2022 the Chief Executive will put in place interim management arrangements to ensure stability and continuity within the service until such time as a suitable replacement can be recruited. As is normal practice in such situations, the Chief Executive will put in place suitable interim management arrangements within the existing team.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

22. There are no additional financial implications as the Director of Corporate and Community Services has reached retirement age and therefore there is no strain on the superannuation fund. All costs associated with the recruitment process will be found from within existing budgets.

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