

Report to: Council



Date of Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

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## Appointment of a new Director of Housing and Health and a new Director of Place

### Report summary:

For Council to consider the recommendation of the Interviewing Sub Committee to appoint a new Director of Housing and Health and Director of Place following the recent recruitment process.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That Council appoints Andrew Wood as Director of Place at East Devon District Council.

That Council appoints Catrin Stark as Director of Housing and Health at East Devon District Council.

### Reason for recommendation:

In line with the Constitution, Council are required to make the final decision regarding the appointment of Directors, following recommendation from the Interviewing Sub Committee.

Officer: Sue Cockayne, HR Business Partner

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### Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

### Equalities impact Medium Impact

Failure to follow relevant employment law and HR policy during recruitment processes could leave the Council open to discrimination claims. The actions taken to date have been taken in accordance with legislation and Council policy.

### Climate change Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; As outlined above and in the report, the recruitment process has been robust and undertaken in accordance with legislation and Council policy.

**Links to background information** Click here to enter links to background information; appendices online; and previous reports. These must link to an electronic document. Do not include any confidential or exempt information.

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
  - A greener East Devon
  - A resilient economy
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## Report in full

1. Changes to the Executive Leadership Team roles, including a new Director of Place, were agreed by Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and temporary interim acting up arrangements were put in place pending the permanent recruitment process. The permanent recruitment process has now taken place, as summarised below. Following this process, suitable candidates for both posts have been selected and Council approval of the appointments is now sought.
2. The Interviewing Sub Committee (a sub committee of the Personnel Committee) are responsible for making recommendations on the appointments of Chief Officers to the Council (including Directors) when vacancies arise in these posts and to take such other action as it deems necessary leading up to the making of those appointments. The Sub Committee consists of seven councillors drawn from the membership of the Personnel Committee which shall include at least one member of the Cabinet, subject to the rules relating to political balance/proportionality (Personnel Committee Terms of Reference, Part 3, Section 2, paragraph 2.10.6).
3. **Recruitment Process**
  - 3.1. The Directors posts were advertised in the Municipal Journal on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Alongside this, a dedicated microsite for the role was developed, which enabled potential candidates to find out more information about the Council and the roles.
  - 3.2. The advert closed on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2024 and 29 applications were received for the Director of Place role and 12 applications for the Director of Housing & Health. A longlist of 7 candidates were selected for the Director of Place role and 4 candidates for the Director of Housing & Health role who were then interviewed by the Chief Executive, a technical assessor and HR on 13<sup>th</sup> August for Director Housing & Health and 14<sup>th</sup> August for Director Place, from which 3 candidates for each role were then shortlisted for consideration by the Sub Committee.
  - 3.3. On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 candidates were invited to an assessment centre. The assessment process included:
    - Psychometric assessments.
    - Group discussion exercise with Assistant Directors.
    - Group discussion exercise with relevant partners from Place and Housing & Health.
  - 3.4. The Interviewing Sub Committee reviewed feedback from the above selection methods and used this to inform the final formal presentation and interview and their appointment recommendation.
  - 3.5. An executive search agency was commissioned to support the recruitment process. This is standard practice for roles at this level as it provides access to a wide range of potential candidates and specialist advice and support, which is particularly helpful given the continuing challenging employment market. This approach had also proved beneficial during the 2023 Director and 2024 Chief Executive recruitments. The agency developed a

recruitment campaign, liaised with potential candidates, and advised and supported the selection process. During the period up to the assessment centre, the agency also undertook several due diligence checks. The agency chosen has a strong track record of working within the local government sector and therefore had the contacts and technical experience to support recruitment to both roles.

#### **4. Appointment of Director of Place**

- 4.1. The appointment of Andrew Wood to the role of Director of Place is recommended following the recruitment process. Andrew has demonstrated his ability to act as a highly effective senior leader and brings a wealth of relevant expertise and knowledge to the role of Director of Place.
- 4.2. If agreed, Andrew Wood as Director of Place will both commence the role with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.
- 4.3. Andrew Wood will be employed on Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Chief Officer terms and conditions at the advertised salary of £102,602.00 per annum.
- 4.4. As this is an internal appointment, the Chief Executive and new Director are currently liaising to confirm backfill arrangements.

#### **5. Appointment of Director of Housing and Health**

- 5.1. The appointment of Catrin Stark to the role of Director of Housing and Health is recommended following the recruitment process. Catrin has a strong background in housing and has worked successfully at a senior level for some years. She has a strong focus on people and culture and her appointment will be positive move forward for Housing & Health.
- 5.2. If agreed, Catrin Stark will commence the role of Director Housing & Health with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.
- 5.3. Catrin Stark will be employed on Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Chief Officer terms and conditions at the advertised salary of £102,602.00 per annum.
- 5.4. As this is an internal appointment, the Chief Executive and new Director are currently liaising to confirm backfill arrangements.

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#### **Financial implications:**

Council have approved these two posts in the establishment on the understanding that the costs of the additional Director post would be found from existing staffing budgets.

#### **Legal implications:**

As is outlined in the report, the procedure for the recruitment of a Chief Executive and Directors is set out in the Officer Procedure Rules. This requires appointment by Full Council following a recommendation by the Interviewing Sub-Committee. Full Council can only appoint where no well-founded objection has been made by a Member of the Cabinet. Council makes the final decision on whether a complaint is well-founded.