

26 February 2020	ITEM: 11
Council	
Appointment of Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

In accordance with the relevant legislation and Constitutional requirements this report seeks approval from Council to appoint to the Corporate Director of Children’s Services.

Following a robust search and selection process, General Services Committee interviewed on 24 February 2020 and unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Sheila Murphy as Corporate Director of Children’s Services. This was supported by the recommendation of the Stakeholder Panel.

1. Recommendations

1.1 To approve in accordance with the Council’s Constitution the appointment of Sheila Murphy as the permanent Corporate Director of Children’s Services.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Corporate Director of Children’s Services, Rory Patterson, retired in June 2019. The Council is required to appoint a Director of Children’s Services and interim arrangements were implemented. After consideration of options the General Services Committee agreed to proceed to recruit permanently to the role.

3. Corporate Director Children’s Services

3.1 The Council is required to appoint a Director of Children’s Services to fulfil statutory functions and comply with Section 18 of the Children’s Act 2004.

3.2 Recruitment to the Corporate Director of Children’s Services originally commenced in September 2019. An executive recruitment agency was

appointed and a full national campaign developed. The two candidates chosen to progress to Selection Day from this initial round unfortunately withdrew from the process at the end of November.

- 3.3 As such, a second recruitment campaign commenced in January 2020. This attracted four applicants which were initially assessed and rated by the agency based on their applications. Longlisting by General Services Committee took place on 3 February 2020, from which all four applicants were selected to progress to the next stage.
- 3.4 Technical Assessments for the four candidates were conducted by an external independent expert on 5 February. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 10 February, from the four candidates two were selected to progress to the Selection Day. One candidate withdrew from the process prior to the Selection Day.
- 3.5 Selection Day took place on 24 February with the remaining candidate. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel and General Services Committee. The Stakeholder Panel consisted of:

1	Kevin Sadler	CEO, The Gateway Academy
2	Petra Back	Headteacher, Graham James Primary Academy
3	Sheila Coates MBE	Director, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)
4	Kristina Jackson	CEO, Thurrock CVS
5	Paul Ballard	Local Police and Partnership Inspector for Thurrock, Essex Police
6	Cici Manwu	Youth Cabinet Representative
7	Roger Harris	Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health, Thurrock Council
8	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, Thurrock Council
9	Julie Harris	Panel Facilitator and HR Business Partner, Thurrock Council

- 3.6 The unanimous recommendation of both the Stakeholder Panel and General Services Committee is to appoint Sheila Murphy as the permanent Corporate Director of Children's Services.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To appoint to this senior position to ensure the council fulfils statutory functions and requirements and has appropriate senior leadership in place to deliver critical services and ambitions.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Appointments to this senior management position has been conducted by General Services Committee with the full engagement of key stakeholders. GSC recommends the candidate be approved by Full Council.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

This is a substantive post and are therefore included within the council's core budgets.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Acting Strategic Lead / Deputy Head of Legal Services / Deputy Monitoring Officer

The legal requirements and implications in relation to the appointment of the Director of Children Services are set out in this report. Save for those requirements and the provisions under the Council's Constitution for appointment to this post, there are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Legal services will be available to advise on any identified legal implications thereof.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Team Manager Community Development & Equalities

The appointment is recommended based on the council's recruitment process which is underpinned by the council's equal opportunity policy.

Report Author:

Jackie Hinchliffe

Director of HR, OD & Transformation

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