

Full Council	DATE 20 th November 2024
REPORT/DECISION TITLE Senior Recruitment	WARD(S) All
CHIEF OFFICER Asad Mushtaq, Executive Director for Finance and Digital	CABINET/LEAD MEMBER Councillor Billy Christie, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services.
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non-exempt report	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes

1 Recommendations:

- A. That Full Council approves the recommendations from the Appointments Committee that the salary package for the role listed in section 2 below should be agreed in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

2 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

The post of Director of Digital Innovation is a key role in the Council-wide transformation and modernisation through delivery of a cutting-edge IT service. Driving forward innovation as a digital leader and leading on developing a digital strategy that will ensure a modern and enabled workforce, deploy technology to allow our residents, businesses and stakeholders to interact with the Council more reflective of their needs and to develop the connectivity of the borough.

The current postholder is on a fixed term contract which is due to expire at the end of March 2025, and a permanent replacement will then be required.

The Appointments Committee recommends that Full Council agrees to the salary package for the Director of Digital Innovation role outlined below in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement. The salary range for the role is £111,510 - £119,229 per annum, plus a market supplement of up to £23,681 per annum, to take the total maximum salary package to £142,910 per annum. This is due to comparator salaries, demand of expertise in this field and transferability of skills across both public and private sectors, and benchmarking of similar posts.

The role is not a Member appointment, but the Executive Director of Finance & Digital will be asking the relevant Cabinet Lead to take an informal role in the recruitment process.

The Job Description for the role is included as an Appendix to this paper.

3 Links to the Merton Priorities (Borough of Sport/Civic Pride/Sustainable Futures)

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Strategic priorities as follows:
- 3.2 Permanent recruitment to this senior role is vital to the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The role of the Director of Digital Innovation is currently covered by a postholder on a fixed term contract, which is due to expire at the end of March 2025. The post was created through a departmental restructure in early 2024 and has been filled initially through a 12 month fixed-term contract. The Council now needs to recruit to this position on a permanent basis.
- 4.2 The role is a key role in the Council-wide transformation and modernisation through delivery of a cutting-edge IT service. Driving forward innovation as a digital leader and lead on developing a digital strategy that will ensure a modern and enabled workforce, deploy technology to allow our residents, businesses and stakeholders to interact with the Council more reflective of their needs and to develop the connectivity of the borough.

5 Available Options

- 5.1 Option 1 – Agree to the Salary range for the permanent recruitment of the post of Director of Digital Innovation to commence as soon as practically possible after the expiry of the current fixed term contract. The advantage of this would be the continuation of the digital innovation service to lead the Council's digital strategy by deploying technology that would allow our resident, businesses and stakeholders to interact with the Council reflective of their needs.
- 5.2 Option 2 – Disagree to the salary range for the permanent recruitment of the post of Director of Digital Innovation. This will lead to the expiry of the current fixed term contract and the role ceasing to be operational.
- 5.3 Option 3 – Do nothing. This will lead to the expiry of the current fixed term contract and the role ceasing to be operational.

6 Preferred Option

- 6.1 Option 1 above is the preferred option, to ensure the continuation of the Council's digital strategy in developing the connectivity of the borough and to support our residents, businesses and stakeholders to interact with us in a way that is reflective of their needs.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 In accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement, Council is required to approve the salary range for this senior appointment.

8 Consultation Results

8.1 Not applicable

9 Next Steps & Timetable: Communication and Implementation of the Decision

9.1 The appointment will be communicated internally and externally as appropriate.

10 Report Appendices

10.1 Appendix A – Job Description

11 Background Papers

None

12 Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications and Sign-Off

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	<p>Section 38 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. It must be approved by a resolution of the Council before it comes into force, it must be prepared and approved before 31 March, and it must be published in such manner as the Council thinks fit (which must include publication on the website).</p> <p>Section 40 of the Localism Act includes provision for the Secretary of State to issue guidance on the content and application of pay policy statements. Councils must have regard to this guidance in the exercise of their functions under the pay policy provisions. The Guidance is statutory guidance, and although it is not law, it is not mere advice, and the Council must consider it carefully and have cogent reasons if it wishes to depart from it. Failure to do so may result in any decision being challenged.</p> <p>The Guidance advises that Full Council should be given the opportunity to vote before salary packages of £100,000 or more are offered in respect of a new appointment. This is consistent with the Council's pay policy statement which states that the approval of Full Council is required prior to</p>	<p>Fabiola Hickson, Head of Law and Procurement & Information Governance</p> <p>7/11/2024</p>

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
	<p>any offer of employment being made where the proposed salary exceeds £100,000.</p> <p>The recommendation in this report complies with the pay policy statement approved by Full Council.</p>	
Finance and other resources	Salary for the Director of Digital Innovation role is contained within agreed budgets for 2024/25.	<i>Asad Mushtaq</i> 11/11/24
Equalities	The contents of this report are designed to ensure that the Council's processes are human rights and equalities compliant, in particular in relation to compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Grading of posts is based on the principles of equal value as determined by use of objective job evaluation schemes. Recruitment will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's recruitment procedures.	<i>Asad Mushtaq</i> 11/11/2024
Climate change	<i>The decisions recommended in this paper have a remote or low impact on Merton's Climate Strategy & Action Plan adopted by full Council on 18th November 2020</i>	<i>Asad Mushtaq</i> 11/11/24
Executive Director	<i>Clearance/Approval of Report</i>	<i>Asad Mushtaq</i> 11/11/24
Cabinet Member/s	<i>Clearance/Approval of Report</i>	<i>Cllr Billy Christie</i>
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