

South Ayrshire Council
Report by Chief Executive
to South Ayrshire Council
of 6 November 2025

Subject: Appointment of Chief Officers

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members in relation to the recent recruitment exercise for Chief Officer vacancies.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on 23 June 2025, the Chief Officers' Appointments/ Appraisal Panel agreed:

3.1.1 that the Chief HR Officer contact the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) to discuss the selection process for the posts of Director of Education, Director of Health and Social Care and Head of Community Health and Care Services.

3.2 At its meeting on 26 June 2025, the Council was advised of the resignation of the Chief Executive with effect from 30 June 2025 and agreed the appointment of an interim Chief Executive with effect from 14 July 2025.

3.3 Subsequently, the Chief Executive vacancy was incorporated into the selection process, with Solace engaged to support the assessment centre element.

4. Detail

4.1 Following a comprehensive two-day assessment centre and panel interview process, which included a joint panel with Health Board colleagues for the Health and Social Care Partnership appointments, the Chief Officers' Appointments/ Appraisal Panel confirmed the following appointments:

- Chief Executive – Stephen Penman;
- Director of Education – Scott Mulholland;
- Director of Health and Social Care Partnership – Mark Inglis; and
- Head of Community Health and Care Services - Stewart Marshall.

4.2 At its meeting on 26 June 2025, the Council agreed to review the interim leadership arrangements at the December 2025 Council meeting. To close this action, Stephen Penman will assume the role of Chief Executive on Monday 17 November 2025. A two-week handover period will follow, during which the interim Chief Executive will support the transition. Thereafter, the interim Chief Executive's tenure will conclude on Sunday 30 November 2025.

4.3 It has been agreed that Mark Inglis will assume the role of Director of Health and Social Care Partnership on Monday 10 November 2025. Thereafter, the interim Director of Health and Social Care Partnership's tenure will conclude on Sunday 16 November.

4.4 The Chief Officers' Appointments/ Appraisal Panel considered and agreed that for all future Chief Officer appointments including joint appointments, Solace should be engaged to deliver the assessment centre component of the selection process.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Costs will be met from existing budget provision.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 As outlined in this report.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating Equalities)

9.1 The proposals in this report do not require to be assessed through an Integrated Impact Assessment.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

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11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

13. Link to Shaping Our Future Council Yes No

13.1 Not applicable.

14. Results of Consultation

14.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

14.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Brian Connolly, Policy Lead for Economy and Strategy, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

15. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

15.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Chief Executive will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

Implementation	Due date	Managed by
Finalisation of recruitment documentation and issuing of contracts	31 October 2025	Chief HR Officer

Background Papers [Chief Officers' Appointments/ Appraisal Panel – 23 June 2025 - Minutes](#) (page 1, item 4)

[South Ayrshire Council - 26 June 2025 - Minutes](#) (page 22, item 17)

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