

Council report



20 January 2021

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Report sponsor	Michael Bracey Chief Executive
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	36
Wards affected	All wards

Executive summary

From April 2013 public health services were returned to the control of Local Authorities with public health responsibilities. Every such local authority must make a joint appointment, with the Secretary of State for Health, to the role of Director of Public Health. The post holder will act as the principal advisor to Councillors and Officers on all health matters.

Locally there is an established arrangement to share the post between Milton Keynes, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils in order to optimise the public health service offer. Bedford Borough Council is the employing authority and led the external recruitment exercise. Vicky Head was appointed by Bedford Borough Council in August 2020 and has effectively been the Council's interim Director of Public Health since the departure of Muriel Scott in August 2020. The appointment is supported by Public Health England.

The post of Director of Public Health is a Statutory Chief Officer and subject to Council Employment Procedure Rules. Usually a Senior Appointments Panel would recruit to and approve the appointment of Director posts. However, given the circumstances and the shared appointment, Council is asked to note the ongoing shared arrangements and approve the permanent appointment of Vicki Head as the Director of Public Health for Milton Keynes in addition to the same roles for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils.

1. Decision to be made

- 1.1 That the appointment of Vicki Head as Director of Public Health for Milton Keynes Council in addition to her current position of Director of Public Health for Bedford Borough Council and pending appointment to Central Bedfordshire Council, be approved.

2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 In January 2014, and further to earlier pilot arrangements, Council approved the principle of a shared Director of Public Health and the appointment of Muriel Scott as Director of Public Health for Milton Keynes, in addition to her positions as Director of Public Health for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils.
- 2.2 Muriel Scott left her post on 31 August 2020 with the subsequent recruitment process being led by Bedford Borough Council, working alongside the Regional Director of Public Health England and the Faculty for Public Health (FPH). Vicky Head was subsequently appointed by Bedford Borough Council and has effectively been acting on an interim basis at Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Councils, subject to approval by respective Councils.
- 2.3 It continues to be the case that it makes logical sense for the position to be shared across the three authorities, an arrangement which is formally supported by Public Health England.
- 2.4 Locally, the post is supported by a Public Health team led by Deputy Director of Public Health for Milton Keynes Council (Oliver Mytton) and three senior leadership posts (Head of Public Health Programmes, Public Health Principal – Children and Young People, and Public Health Principal – Primary Care and Performance).

3. Implications of the decision

- 3.1 The appointment ensures that the Council's statutory responsibilities for Public Health are met appropriately alongside the Council's key Corporate Aim that Milton Keynes is a healthy city.
- 3.2 If Council is not minded to approve the appointment, it would undermine the shared arrangements between the partnership authorities and require the independent appointment of a Director of Public Health for Milton Keynes Council. This would undermine the wider strategic benefits of a shared Director across three unitary authorities with comparable communities.

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	Y
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	
Communication		Procurement	
Energy Efficiency		Workforce	Y

a) Financial implications

None - the cost of the Director of Public Health role is met from the Council's public health budget.

b) Legal implications

The Health and Social Care Act 2013 places a duty on local authorities with public health responsibilities to appoint an individual (Director of Public Health) to have responsibility for its public health functions.

c) Other implications

Equalities / workforce – the recruitment process was taken in accordance with the recruiting authority's (Bedford Borough Council) Equal Opportunity Policy.

List of annexes

None.

List of background papers

None.