

Recruitment of Chief Operating Officer (S151)



Andrew Tromans

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Welcome from the Leader & Chief Executive



Cllr Leigh Frost
Councillor for Bodmin
St Petroc's
Leader of Cornwall
Council



Kate Kennally
Chief Executive

Welcome,

Hello and thank you for your interest in joining Cornwall Council and serving the people of our beautiful Duchy

As Leader of Cornwall Council, I am honoured to represent the place I've called home all my life. I'm proud of Cornwall and I know firsthand the challenges that come with leading one of the largest Unitary Authorities in the country. Our mission is simple but powerful: To build a better Cornwall, for one and all.

Our priorities reflect what matters most to our communities. We're also focused on getting back to basics; repairing roads, improving public transport and making

smarter use of our housing stock. We know the challenges are real but so is our determination to tackle them head on.

Cornwall is more than just stunning coastlines and countryside. It's a place of innovation, resilience, and community spirit. From our critical minerals to our food and drink sector, from renewable energy to cultural heritage. Cornwall has the potential to lead the way nationally.

If you share our passion for Cornwall and want to make a difference, we welcome your application. Together, we can shape a brighter future our residents and ensure Cornwall thrives, not just today but for generations to come.

Cllr Leigh Frost

Welcome,

Thank you for your interest in this exciting and pivotal role at Cornwall Council as our next Chief Operating Officer and Section 151 Officer.

As one of the largest councils in the country, Cornwall Council has ambitious plans for the future, shaped by our natural resources and strong sense of place and community. We have an almost unique array of new opportunities for growth and development ranging from critical minerals, marine renewables and aerospace which together with our core industries have meant that Cornwall has benefitted from stronger growth in GVA than the UK average over the past 20 years.

Welcome from the Leader & Chief Executive

Whilst there are levels of vulnerability in some areas and a rapidly ageing population, we are proud to be an ambitious Council for our communities. We are constantly challenging and transforming our services to give the best service to our communities, encouraging innovation with a strong focus on digital solutions alongside building the homes that we need and driving growth through our investment portfolio and strong partnership structures.

A 'Team Cornwall' approach is central to how we work. We have a strong culture of partnership and innovation in Cornwall – whether it is working closely with our residents, elected Members, stakeholders or with Government to ensure Cornwall gains even greater devolved autonomy in line with the recognition of the Cornish as a protected national minority.

We are now seeking a **Chief Operating Officer and Section 151 Officer** who will help us build on these strengths – ensuring that we have the sustainable financial strategy, systems and culture needed to deliver our priorities. This is both a strategic and enabling leadership role: responsible for stewardship of the Council's £1.5bn revenue budget and £1.9bn capital

programme; for leading a diverse corporate services directorate of around 1,000 people; and for ensuring our resources, governance, and digital capability are fully aligned with our ambitions for Cornwall.

You will lead the Council's organisational engine room – ensuring that our business support services fully enable the delivery of political priorities. That means translating strategy into action, defining and establishing the programmes and projects that will deliver our four-year Business Plan. It also means developing a high-performing team – bringing together newly-recruited individuals, to create a shared sense of purpose, and enable them to perform at pace.

Your focus will include driving productivity and effectiveness, reviewing services to ensure they are operating optimally, and addressing any bottlenecks that slow progress. You will also strengthen partnerships across sectors, ensuring that our services are easy to do business with and that we can work at pace with investors, developers and delivery partners. Through digital innovation, service redesign and a commercial mindset, you will ensure our organisation is continually learning, improving and delivering outstanding value for money.

This is an exciting opportunity for an existing COO seeking a fresh challenge at scale, or for a high-performing finance leader motivated by the purpose of local government at its best.

In Cornwall, we proudly put our communities front and centre of everything that we do both for today and for tomorrow. Our work is guided by our priority outcomes underpinned by a focus on Our People, Our Planet and Our Pounds. The successful candidate will have the foresight, drive, energy and expertise as our Chief Operating Officer to embed our priority outcomes into the way the Council works, through citizen centred design and a relentless focus on securing value for money for the Cornwall Council taxpayer.

I am so proud of this organisation, and I am seeking an exceptional candidate to share my passion for Cornwall and for making sure that Cornwall Council is a leading trailblazer local authority which can clearly demonstrate the benefits of being an established, mature, large unitary council.

Kate Kennally

The Opportunity

Chief Operating Officer (S151)

Salary up to £165,000

Cornwall Council



Shape the future of one of the UK's most ambitious and distinctive places.

Cornwall is a place of extraordinary potential – rich in natural assets, powered by innovation, and defined by strong, connected communities. As one of the largest and most complex unitary authorities in the country, we serve over half a million residents and manage a revenue budget of more than £1.5bn and a capital investment programme exceeding £1.9bn.

We're proud of our strong foundations – sound governance, motivated people, and a track record of delivery. But we're also ambitious for what's next. Guided by our mission – working with communities for a carbon neutral Cornwall, where everyone can start well, live well and age well – we're driving forward a bold agenda for sustainable growth, digital transformation, and inclusive prosperity.

We're now seeking an outstanding leader to join our Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team as Chief Operating Officer and Section 151 Officer – a career-defining role at the heart of one of the UK's most exciting public sector organisations.

You'll bring strategic vision, political acumen and financial expertise, ensuring we have the systems, resources and culture to deliver our priorities and FAIR values (Fairness, Ambition, Inclusion and Respect).

This is a strategic and enabling leadership role, at the heart of the Council's organisational engine room – ensuring that our customer and corporate services fully enable the delivery of political priorities. With accountability for a wide-ranging directorate – spanning Finance,

Legal, Digital, HR, Strategy and Customer Services amongst others – you will translate strategy into action, leading transformation across the Council, embedding our People-Powered, Digitally-Enabled operating model, and driving sustainable services and great value for money for our residents.

We're looking for a collaborative, forward-thinking leader with a strong record of delivery in complex, multi-stakeholder environments – whether from local government or other comparable sectors. You'll be equally comfortable operating at pace, shaping corporate strategy, and engaging Members, partners and communities to achieve shared outcomes for Cornwall.

If you're motivated by purpose, inspired by Cornwall, and ready to make a lasting impact, we'd love to hear from you.



Role Specification

Role Title: COO (\$151)

Directorate: Customer & Corporate Services

Reports To: Chief Executive

Salary: £135,406-£171,760

Pension Scheme: LGPS

DBS Required: Basic

Date: September 20025

1. Purpose & Accountabilities

Role Purpose

- To be a key contributor and influential member the Council's Directorate team (CDT) which comprises the Chief Executive and four other Strategic Directors. The Chief Operating Officer will work together effectively with other CDT and Members to deliver the Council's overall strategy and business plan.
- To focus on and have responsibility for ensuring that the Council has a sustainable and viable business plan to meet its objectives, to ensure the resources of the Council are directed towards the delivery of the business plan,

underpinned by strong governance arrangements and ensuring the Council is resident focused and driving significant improvements in customer satisfaction.

- To ensure effective stewardship of resources through discharging the statutory responsibilities of the Council's section 151 officer.
- To own enterprise-wide systems and processes being responsible for ensuring that they are continuously improved to ensure value for money
- To lead on the transformation of the Council, with a particular emphasis on developing and utilising digital strategies to enable efficient and effective service delivery.
- To provide strategic and operational leadership to deliver and embed a One Council approach across all Directorates for our processes and procedures to ensure consistency and assurance in line with Council we Need operating model and the Council's business plan.
- To put in place effective performance management and supplier management arrangements to ensure delivery of their

strategic objectives; authorised on behalf of the Strategic Director.

- Will act as the Council's lead officer for managing the relationship with the Council owned entities.

Financial Accountability

- Accountable for directorate and corporate net revenue budgets of c. £130m .

People Management Responsibilities

- To directly line manage and lead the Directorate leadership team (DLT) consisting of; Service Director for Strategy and Partnerships; Service Director for Resources and Performance; Service Director for Legal and Assurance (MO) and the Service Director – Customer and Business Operations (Deputy Chief Operating Officer)
- To have indirect accountability for circa 1,000 employees across the Customer and Corporate Support Directorate.

Role Specific Accountabilities

- To have overall leadership accountability for the following services:
 - Resources and Performance (Accountancy, Treasury Management and Pensions, Assessment, Billing and Collection and Performance and Business Planning)
 - Legal and Assurance (Legal Services, Governance, Elections, Democratic Services, Audit and Commercial Assurance)
 - Customer and Business Operations (Customer Services, Business Systems, Digital and IS Services, HR and Transformation and Change)
 - Strategy and Partnerships (Communications and Engagement, Strategy, Equalities Business Support)
- To work with Members, partners and stakeholders to deliver Council wide priorities which achieve outcomes as set out in the Business Plan.
- To ensure that outcome and delivery strategies are driven by engagement with stakeholders and are informed by best practice.

- To oversee the allocation of resources across Cornwall against priority outcomes.
- To shape the commercial approach of the Council to ensure that all contracts protect the core interests of the Council, provide value for money, and are monitored rigorously.
- To be responsible for risk and reputation management and ensure that the Council demonstrates the highest levels of governance and standards in public life.
- To maximise opportunities for the Council to be the local democratic leader of public services in the Cornwall in order to better manage the total public sector resources available.
- To act as the Senior Responsible Officer for the Corporate Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- To be a visible place leader within Cornwall, able to meet and engage with local communities as required out of office hours and to be within commutable daily travel to Cornwall Council.

2. Knowledge, Capabilities and Competencies

Systems leader and navigator

- To be a visible system leader for community safety partnership arrangements ensuring that strategies and delivery plans are based on clear intelligence and insight and effectively engage statutory and community-based partners to ensure Cornwall's communities are safe and that harm is reduced.
- To be a visible system leader in health and wellbeing partnership arrangements ensuring that strategies and delivery plans are based on clear intelligence and insight through the JSNA.
- To be a visible system leader for emergency preparedness and management and recovery, ensuring that the council is an effective partner in the Local Resilience Forum and discharges its civil contingency responsibilities effectively with local communities.
- To be a visible system leader in building effective delivery partnerships between the local authority and town and parish council to promote subsidiarity, community participation and well-being and the sustainability of community services.

- Responsible for overseeing the delivery of outcome delivery plans across the directorate that consider new opportunities for working with communities and partners.
- Responsible for providing strategic check and challenge where services are identified as either not commissioned or delivered in an outcome-focused way that are responsive to the needs of the communities of Cornwall.

Political leadership and financial control

- Responsible for ensuring the directorate delivers the political ambitions and desired outcomes set by cabinet and relevant portfolio holders.
- Responsible for ensuring appropriate financial controls and value for money delivery within the Directorate and for ensuring effective and timely financial and performance reporting is in place.
- Responsible for ensuring that all grant monies received by the Government for the delivery of community wellbeing responsibilities are spent in line with grant conditions.
- Responsible for providing directorate contributions to the business plan for Cornwall and embedding a commercial mindset in directorate practices.

Co-production and community experience

- Responsible for ensuring that directorate outcomes and how they're delivered are truly co-produced and owned by the people of Cornwall.
- Responsible for ensuring that the directorate drives to continually improve satisfaction and outstanding experience for the people and communities of Cornwall.

Developing the future workforce

- Responsible for ensuring that the directorate has the right workforce strategy in place to ensure the right people in the right place, with the right skills to deliver services for the people of Cornwall.
- Responsible for identifying and supporting the development of talent within the directorate.
- Responsible for building and ensuring the right leadership capacity to deliver the directorate's responsibilities now and into the future.
- Responsible for ensuring that the authority has the right public health leadership capabilities to support effective cross council and partnership working within Directorate Leadership Teams (DLTs) and in strategic partnerships.

Leading change, learning and innovation

- Responsible for influencing change and ensuring a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and evaluation is embedded across the directorate.
- Responsible for setting the ambition for the directorate and driving business transformation programmes to ensure delivery of the council business and financial plan and wider council transformation strategies.
- Responsible for delivering two-way accountability through effective employee engagement practices across the Directorate.

Place based leadership

- Responsible for acting as a strategic convenor, building relationships with key leaders of organisations working to support the people of Cornwall and deliver the 2050 Cornwall Plan.
- Responsible for setting the directorate vision for how services work in new ways in localities and communities.

Inclusion and diversity

- Responsible for ensuring that unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation is challenged and action taken to ensure that Cornwall and the local authority is actively promoting inclusion and equity across Cornwall's diverse communities.
- Responsible for setting the vision for an inclusive working environment within the directorate where everyone is able to be themselves in-line with the Council's values and behavioural framework.

Performance and quality standards

- Responsible as a Chief Officer of the Council for the council's overall performance and delivery of the council's business and financial plan.
- Responsible for directorate performance and addressing service underperformance through the building of a strong performance and assurance culture.
- Responsible for ensuring that the directorate provides effective public health services and public health leadership for the Council of the Isles of Scilly in line with the inter-authority agreement.

- Responsible for ensuring directorate compliance to regulatory and statutory guidance.
- Responsible for ensuring that directorate teams follow council policies and standards in relation to safeguarding and those at risk.
- Responsible for ensuring directorate compliance to health and safety standards.
- Responsible for considering and implementing in line with council policy, directorate opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of staff and suppliers.

- This role requires significant experience of working at a senior financial management level in a large organisation; as a CCAB or CIMA qualified accountant you'll have the vision and experience to be a highly credible COO with Section 151 responsibilities.
- Successful and consistent achievement in the leadership of relevant functions at senior management level, within a local authority or other organisation of comparable scope and complexity.
- Ability to articulate a clear vision and strategy for the service and how to improve

and transform outcomes, and experience of translating policy and strategy into tangible outcomes for the benefit of customers/ residents.

- A proven record of successful change management, delivering new working policies and practices alongside significant cultural and structural change.
- Wide ranging experience of financial management including budget formulation, financial planning, monitoring and control, within tight financial limits in a complex organisation.
- Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the law, government policy and best practice in relation to the functions including across the Directorate.
- Significant experience of giving advice to and building relationships with elected members and/or Board Members at the highest level.
- Successful track record of achieving equality of opportunity in both employment and service delivery.

Cornwall Council offer a guaranteed technical interview for applicants who meet the essential criteria who have experienced being a child in care.

for our residents and communities

“ We are the UK’s fifth nation – proud of our Celtic heritage, shaped by our pioneering history and focused on our future. We will work hard to unlock the potential of our people, communities and resources for the benefit of one and all. ”

We stand for...



Leading courageously, putting people first with common sense decision making.



Spending every pound wisely, caring for the very young to the very old.



Listening to communities and celebrating Cornwall’s unique history, culture and natural environment.



Our priorities for Cornwall



It's at the heart of what we do

Further Reading

The Cornwall Council Business Plan 2022-26 sets forth a clear, ambitious roadmap for the future of Cornwall. It outlines our strategic priorities, guiding principles, and measurable goals that will drive transformational change across our communities, services, and environment:



[Council Business Plan 2022-26](#)



[Council Leadership Team](#)

Our priorities are underpinned by a simple but powerful commitment to work hard to unlock the potential of our people, communities and resources - for the benefit of one and all:



[Cornwall's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy](#)



[Cornwall's recent LGA Equalities Peer Challenge](#)

Next Steps & How to Apply

This guidance contains important information to help with your application:

Please apply by submitting a CV and Supporting Statement (no more than four sides of A4 in length per document aligned to the person specification). Please also include your contact details.

Please ensure your full employment history is outlined in your CV; where there are essential criteria, competencies and/or qualifications please make clear how you meet these. We may wish to verify this information during the recruitment process.

Please provide the details of two referees. Note that we will only approach referees for candidates proceeding to final selection and only with your permission. Please clearly indicate whether we can approach each referee before the selection date.

Please share with us in your Supporting Statement the values and behaviours that you bring to your leadership, and how you will transfer your skills and experience into this role.

Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form when you upload your details via our website.

Please upload your application by the closing date – no applications will be accepted once the long listing process has begun.

Following long-listing, you will be contacted directly by a Penna consultant to update you on the status of your application.

Asking for adjustments: we're committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to consider doing anything differently during the application, interview, or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us.

To apply for this role, please visit the following link to upload your CV and Cover Letter:
<https://penna.com/jobs>

Key Dates

Applications deadline	Sunday 9 November
Technical Interviews	14-18 November
Final Interviews	Friday 5 December

For questions or a confidential discussion, please contact:



Andrew Tromans
on 07805 226301 or
andrew.tromans@penna.com

Penna Executive Search

At Penna, we connect exceptional professionals with leadership opportunities that make a real difference.

Working with integrity and diligence - and with a non-negotiable commitment to inclusion - we ensure that clients access the strongest talent and that candidates are supported to showcase the unique value they bring.

Whether you're ready for the next step in your career or building a successful leadership team, our specialist consultants help turn ambition into reality.

We don't simply fill roles, we empower leaders to fulfil their potential and shape organisations that deliver sustainable improved outcomes.

Any questions?
Please don't hesitate to contact us



Andrew Tromans
07805 226301 / andrew.tromans@penna.com