

Bristol City Council chief quits to take up new role in London

The chief executive of Bristol City Council is quitting his job to move to London and run two councils in the capital.

Mike Jackson has worked for the council in Bristol since 2018, but will leave the city this autumn to take up a new role as chief executive of Wandsworth and Richmond borough councils. The move will likely be approved by councillors in the two boroughs this week.

Mayor Marvin Rees said Mr Jackson has “one of the toughest jobs in the city”, but would leave Bristol “in a stronger, more stable place”. The chief executive role is a non-political civil servant position, responsible for the day-to-day operational running of the council.

In a statement, Mr Jackson said: “The new role is a tremendous opportunity for me personally and professionally, as it has been an ambition of mine to revisit life in London with my family and it was simply too good to pass up.

“I have been honoured to work in Bristol, a city and council with incredible vibrancy, ambition and diversity. It has been a fulfilling, challenging and invigorating few years, and I’ll be leaving with many fond memories and a tremendous respect for the hard work and dedication of our staff, councillors and partners throughout the city.

“I leave a better person for my experience here. I’ll be working with the mayor to ensure that strong leadership arrangements are in place and that the council can continue to support Bristol and its citizens through these challenging times.”

His exit means council chiefs will need to search for a replacement. Few details are available yet, but the mayor said the departure created “fresh opportunity for talented people” to take over. Whoever takes over next will face steering the council through major challenges like the cost of living crisis, skyrocketing inflation, and the transition to a committee-based model.

Mr Rees said: “For the last four years, Mike has been an incredible leader for Bristol. Since 2018, he has led a committed, resilient and high-performing team through the most difficult of circumstances, not least the response to Covid-19. He has brought grip, pace, professionalism and personal warmth to one of the toughest jobs in the city, and he should be proud to leave Bristol in a stronger, more stable place than he found it.

“He will be a hard act to follow, but I know his departure will inevitably create some fresh opportunity for other talented people to step up and into new career challenges. I’m working with Mike to consider all of the options that are open to us now, and we’ll share more soon.”

Mr Jackson was previously chief executive of North Somerset Council, before starting at Bristol City Council as executive director for resources and head of paid service.

He then became chief executive in 2020. His start date for the new role in London has not yet been confirmed. Earlier this spring it was reported his pay package last year totalled £171,000.

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