

Report to	Full Council
Date of meeting	18 th May 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Hugh Evans, Leader
Report author	Gary Williams, Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services
Title	Chief Executive Recruitment 2021

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report is about the recruitment process that needs to be undertaken to recruit a new Chief Executive.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To seek Council approval to recruit to the role of Chief Executive and to agree the approach to be taken in the recruitment process. This includes the remuneration package to be offered.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Council agree to recruit a new Chief Executive
- 3.2. That Council agree the proposed remuneration package
- 3.3. That Council agree the recruitment pack
- 3.4. That Council agree the recruitment process

4. Report details

4.1. *Background*

The post of Chief Executive has been vacant since 7th April 2021. The previous Chief Executive had been in post for just short of 3 years.

The position of Chief Executive holds the statutory responsibilities of Head of Paid Service, required under section 4, of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and is appointed the roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

It is essential that arrangements for the recruitment process to fill this post are agreed and actioned quickly to ensure that the Authority continues to have robust management and governance in place following the Chief Executive's departure.

4.2. Remuneration

The Chief Executive Officer's current salary package is as follows: -

- Salary Scale comprising of 3 incremental points:

£136,312

£134,268

£132,254

- Relocation Costs of up to £8000 as per the Council's policy
- Permanent contract of employment
- Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Returning Officer Fees
- 30 days' annual leave plus 2 additional statutory days and bank holidays

The Senior Remuneration Panel met on 22nd April 2021 to review the remuneration package for the Chief Executive. The comparative market data provided to panel and which is attached in Appendix A, show that based on the 6 North Wales Authorities the salary for the Chief Executive in Denbighshire is the 2nd highest.

Based on this information, the Remuneration Panel concluded that the remuneration package was appropriate and no further action was required.

4.3. Legal Position

In accordance with the Standing Orders (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2014, there is a requirement for posts with salaries of more than £100k and which are for the duration of 12 months or more, to be advertised externally.

The Council's Policy and Procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers is contained within the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in Section 11 of the Constitution. This states that Full Council will appoint the Chief Executive.

As part of the process, a Special Appointments Panel will be set up who will be responsible for shortlisting candidates for interview and assessing their suitability for the post via an assessment process and interviews. Following this the Special Appointments Panel will present a shortlist of suitable candidates to Full Council. Based on a presentation and interview by each candidate to Full Council, Full Council will make the decision on who to appoint to the role.

4.4. Special Appointments Panel

It is recommended that the Special Appointments Panel comprises of 7 members and is a politically balanced panel which is chaired by the Leader and will include a maximum of 2 other Cabinet Members. The Panel will be supported by the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services and the HR Services Manager.

Group Leaders are requested to nominate Members for the Panel and a formal request for nominations will be sent out following Full Council.

4.5. Management of the Process

It is recommended that the recruitment campaign is managed internally by the HR Services Manager with support from an external company to undertake some of the assessments remotely. This would mean that there would not be a need to appoint external consultants to undertake the process.

4.6. Recruitment Process

4.6.1. Job Application Pack

The current job description for the role of Chief Executive was last updated during the Senior Leadership Review in April 2016 and this forms part of the draft Recruitment Pack in Appendix B. It is recommended that Council agrees the Recruitment Pack and to delegate responsibility to authorise any minor changes to these documents to the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader and Lead Member for Finance and Efficiency.

4.6.2. Advertising Campaign

Previously the Council have commissioned a recruitment consultant to undertake an executive search when recruiting for the Chief Executive's post. An executive search is the process by which consultants acting on behalf of the authority would proactively identify potential candidates for the post of Chief Executive and contact them to invite them to apply for the role. This has proved successful in the past, however it is time consuming and expensive.

It is proposed that in its place, that a recruitment advertising campaign support by the Communication and Marketing Team is undertaken which would include advertising in the Guardian jobs which includes online and targeted advertising; in other key National and Local publications e.g. MJ; LinkedIn, Golwg and by a bespoke microsite on the Denbighshire Website. The aim would be to keep it live which regular remainders placed during the 4-week period. A detailed plan with timescales is attached in Appendix C.

4.6.3. Application Form

The application form will be a bespoke form that in addition to the basic personal information, employment history and education will include:

4.6.3.1. Competency based questions (300 words each)

There will be competency based questions that on Leadership, Change/Continuous Improvement; Partnership Working which the candidate will be expected to complete drawing on recent experience.

4.6.3.2. References

The candidates will be required to provide written references from the last 3 employers.

For the successful candidates, the Leader and Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services will have a 30-minute discussion with the referee from the current employer.

4.6.3.3. Longlisting Exercise (1500 words)

As part of the application form the candidates will be expected to write a short report on a pre-set question.

4.6.3.4. Supporting Statement (1500 words)

4.7. Longlisting

The first stage would be to identify candidates that meet the essential criteria for the role to form the longlist. The aim would be to identify 4-6 suitable candidates from the longlist to invite for interview. The longlist exercise in 4.6.3.3 will be used to shortlist from the longlist.

4.8. Research

HR / web team to carryout research on candidate's online presence such as Social media, LinkedIn, google searches, websites for current/ previous employers, webcasts available.

4.9. Assessments

Prior to the Assessment Days the candidates would be expected to complete the following online assessments:

- SHL OPQ – Leadership report
- LJI/Watson Glazier

4.10. Assessment Centre

A selection of assessments to be undertaken that assess the candidates' ability to work under pressure, their approach, ability to respond to unknown, professionalism, resilience and knowledge. Examples of potential assessments were discussed at Council briefing. It is recommended that Council delegates the responsibility for choosing the final assessments to the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader and Lead Member for Finance and Efficiency.

4.11. Full Council

A pre-planned 15-minute presentation giving an introduction into themselves, their background and why they have applied for the job.

No set questions for Full Council but a 30-minute discussion with the candidate

whereby each political group can ask 2/3 questions each.

The actual format of the presentation to full council to be determined nearer the time, taking into account the Welsh Government Rules relating to Covid.

4.12. **Timeline**

Full Council approval to recruitment process and remuneration package	18 th May 2021
Post to be advertised	1 st June
Closing Date	30 th June
Long listing, assessment, shortlisting	w/b 5 th July
Remote/On-line Assessments	w/b 12 th July
Assessment Centre & Interview	20 th /21 st July
Full Council	22 nd July

4.13. **Performance Appraisal**

A politically balance panel comprising of 5 members to be appointed to manage the Chief Executive's performance. Their role would be to:

- Undertake the probationary period review at 3 and 5 months
- Set objectives for the Chief Executive at the end of the 6 months' probationary period
- Undertake formal performance reviews (at 12 months, 18 months, 24 months and annually thereafter)
- Leader to undertake monthly 1-1s which will feed into the probationary period reviews and the performance appraisals.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. This will ensure that the Council has robust leadership and governance arrangements to deliver on the Corporate Priorities.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. The recruitment campaign and assessments are likely to costs in the region of £10,000.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment is not required as the proposal are in accordance with the agreed policies.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Cabinet has been consulted upon regarding the process and the Remuneration Panel has considered the remuneration package for the post. A presentation was given to Group Leaders and a Full Council Workshop.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. There is obviously base budget available to cover the post once appointed. The interim arrangements will result in an in year underspend which should more than cover any recruitment costs. The recommendations of the report are supported.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The Council will be at risk if there is insufficient senior management capacity and expert knowledge to lead the organisation.

10.2. There is a risk that the recruitment campaign will be unsuccessful. However, it is hoped that the remuneration package is sufficiently attractive to draw a good pool of candidates.

10.3. There is a risk that the recruitment campaign for a Chief Executive at a neighbouring authority will impact on the campaign for Denbighshire.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. S112 Local Government Act 1972 - power to appoint staff

11.2. S4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 - requirement to designate a Head of Paid Service