

Report to	Full Council
Date of meeting	8 th July 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Jason McLellan, Leader
Report author	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Services: People
Title	Chief Executive Recruitment 2025

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 current Chief Executive will retire on 30th January 2026 after being in post for 4½ 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 retirement.

4.2. Remuneration

The Chief Executive Officer's current salary package (subject to national pay increase) is as follows: -

- Salary Scale comprising of 3 incremental points:
 - £148,822
 - £146,620
 - £144,452
- Relocation Costs of up to £8000 as per the Council's policy
- Permanent contract of employment
- Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Additional Returning Officer Fees for Elections
- 30 days' annual leave plus 2 additional statutory days and bank holidays

The Senior Remuneration Panel met on 15th April 2025 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 highest at the minimum scale point and 3rd highest for the maximum scale point.

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 that 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 it will be Full Council who make the decision on who to appoint to the role.

4.4. Special Appointments Panel

It is recommended that the Special Appointments Panel consists 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 Corporate Support Services: People 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 last CEO recruitment campaign in April 2021 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 Corporate Support Services: People, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

4.6.2. Advertising Campaign

Previously, in 2018, 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.

In 2021, for the recruitment of the current Chief Executive, it was agreed that an external consultant would not be required and the process would be resourced in house by HR.

Replicating the process from 2021, it is proposed that a recruitment advertising campaign supported 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 with regular reminders placed during the 6 week advertising 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 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, Head of Corporate Support Services: People and HR Services Manager will have a 30-minute discussion with the referee from the current employer.

4.6.3.3. Shortlisting 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. Shortlisting

The first stage would be to identify candidates that meet the essential criteria for the role to form the shortlist. The aim would be to identify 4-6 suitable candidates from the shortlisting to invite for interview.

4.8. Research

HR / web team to carry out 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 to the tasks, ability to respond to unknown along with their professionalism, resilience and knowledge. It is recommended that Council delegates the responsibility for choosing the final assessments to the Head of Corporate Support Services: People, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

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 questions each.

4.12. Timeline

Full Council approval to recruitment process and remuneration package	8th July 2025
Post to be advertised	21st July 2025
Closing Date	1st September 2025
Shortlisting	11th September 2025
Remote/On-line Assessments	12th September – 19th September 2025
Assessment Centre & Interview	24th September & 25th September 2025
Full Council	26th September 2025

4.13. Performance Appraisal

The Leader of the Council will carry out the performance Management of this role with group leaders carrying out an annual review. The process will involve:

- 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. The Leader has been consulted upon regarding the process and the Remuneration Panel has considered the remuneration package for the post.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. There is base budget available to cover the post once appointed. The recruitment costs will be covered within existing budgets. 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.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. S112 Local Government Act 1972

11.2. S54 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021