



Supplement for

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 2026

Agenda No    Item

11.    Chief Executive Recruitment (Pages 3 - 10)



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| <br><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE<br/>DISTRICT COUNCIL</b> | <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>  |
| Name and date of Committee  | <b>FULL COUNCIL – 25 FEBRUARY 2026</b>  |
| Subject   | <b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT</b>  |
| Wards affected  | None  |
| Accountable member  | Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council<br>Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a>  |
| Accountable officer   | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer and Electoral Returning Officer<br>Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>   |
| Report author   | Kathryn Dowell, Strategic People Lead<br>Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>  |
| Summary/Purpose   | To present the outcome of the recruitment process for the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) role and to seek Full Council's approval of the Selection Panel's recommendation to appoint Philip Martin with a secondment to be the Council's next Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026 until the 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2028, to fit in with the expected Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Vesting Day. |
| Annexes   | Annex A – Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) Job Description  |
| Recommendation(s)   | That Council resolves to:<br>Approve the appointment and salary of Philip Martin as Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) of West Oxfordshire District Council from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026 until the 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2028, to fit in with the expected Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Vesting Day.  |
| Corporate priorities  | Working Together for West Oxfordshire   |
| Key Decision  | NO  |
| Exempt  | NO  |
| Consultees/<br>Consultation   | The recruitment and interview process was carried out in accordance with the Council's established procedures and in line with the process agreed by the Council's Performance and Appointments Committee. The  |

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|  | <p>Performance and Appointments Committee agreed a panel of three members to interview candidates and make a recommendation to Council.</p> <p>Appropriate HR and governance advice was sought to ensure compliance with statutory and constitutional requirements.<br/>As per the process for the agreement of reports being presented at Full Council, this report has been circulated to and agreed as follows:</p> <p>Director of Governance and Regulatory Services<br/>Director of Finance Services<br/>Head of Legal Services</p> <p>In line with legal requirements the Council's Executive Members were consulted on the proposed appointment.</p> <p>As this was an internal appointment process for a statutory role, wider public consultation was not required.</p> |
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Performance and Appointments Committee considered the recruitment process for the Chief Executive at its meeting on 4 February 2026. Following the completion of interview on 17 February 2026, the Selection Panel reviewed the assessment outcomes and agreed to put Philip Martin forward to Full Council for approval.
- 1.2** The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) role will be offered to the candidate on a secondment basis until 31 March 2028, to fit in with the expected Local Government Review (LGR) Vesting Day. This arrangement is designed to provide protection for Philip Martin as he transitions into LGR.
- 1.3** This report sets out the basis for that recommendation, including the evaluation of the candidate and the constitutional requirement for Full Council to approve the appointment. The report seeks Full Council's agreement to appoint Philip Martin as Chief Executive on a secondment basis, enabling the Council to move forward with stable senior leadership and continuity in the organisation's strategic direction towards LGR.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The current Chief Executive, Giles Hughes, will retire at the end of May 2026. To ensure continuity of leadership and to allow sufficient time for an orderly transition, the Council agreed that the recruitment process should initially focus on identifying a suitable internal candidate, with the option to move to an external recruitment exercise should no appointable internal candidate be found.
- 2.2** The Performance and Appointments Committee considered and endorsed this approach at its meeting on 4 February 2026. An internal recruitment and selection process was subsequently undertaken in accordance with the Council's established procedures. The candidate was assessed against the leadership competencies, strategic capabilities and professional requirements expected of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- 2.3** A formal interview took place on the 17 February 2026. Following consideration of the assessment outcome, the Selection Panel of three members agreed that Philip Martin, currently the Director of Place be put forward for appointment to the role of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) on a secondment basis for the reasons detailed above.
- 2.4** In accordance with the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, all elected members are hereby notified of the proposed appointment and given the opportunity to raise any objections as per the Council's statutory requirements.
- 2.5** The appointment of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) is a function reserved to Full Council. Approval of the candidate on a secondment basis will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to designate a Head of Paid Service under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Confirming the appointment at this stage will also support effective succession planning and ensure stable senior leadership as the organisation prepares for the transition.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1** The forthcoming retirement of the current Chief Executive, Giles Hughes, requires the Council to ensure continuity and stability in its senior leadership.
- 3.2** An internal recruitment process was undertaken in line with the approach agreed by the Performance and Appointments Committee on 4 February 2026, with interview held on 17 February 2026.
- 3.3** Following consideration of the assessment outcomes, the Selection Panel has identified Philip Martin as the candidate they wish to take forward to Full Council for approval. The process has complied with the Council's constitutional requirements and the relevant statutory provisions.
- 3.4** Full Council is now asked to approve the appointment so that appropriate arrangements can be made to support an effective transition and maintain strong organisational leadership.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) will be recruited on a salary of £119,531 under the JNC Chief Executive and Chief Officer Pay Rates used by the Council.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Designating the Chief Executive as the Council's respective Head of Paid Service will fulfil the council's duty under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and related legislation.
- 5.2** Informing all members of the recommendations and giving them the opportunity to raise any objections has satisfied the requirements of the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.

### **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1** It is a statutory requirement for every local authority to designate a Head of Paid Service, and the process set out in this report ensures that the Council fulfils its responsibilities under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

### **7.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1** The Council's employment practices are consistent with equalities legislation.

### **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** There are no climate or ecological emergency implications arising directly from this report.  
(END)



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Role Description and Employee Specification

|                                    |                       |                        |  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Job Title:</b>                  | Chief Executive       | <b>Location:</b>       | Witney   |
| <b>Department:</b>                 |                       | <b>Service:</b>        | Chief Executive  |
| <b>Reports to:</b>                 | Leader of the Council | <b>Working Hours:</b>  | 37 hours per week  |
| <b>Salary:</b>                     | Up to £125,878        | <b>Peer Group:</b>     | N/A  |
| <b>Business World Post Number:</b> | 100878                | <b>Job Group:</b>      | Chief Executive  |
| <b>Contract Type:</b>              | Fixed term contract   | <b>Direct Reports:</b> | Director of Governance and Regulatory Services<br>Director of Finance Services<br>Director of Place Services |

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| <b>Overall purpose of the Post:</b>    | <p>To work in partnership with elected members to set the organisational vision and provide strategic leadership to the Council during Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). To provide clear direction and leadership throughout the organisation as principal adviser to the Council, ensuring delivery of the Council's priorities, objectives and plans, and delivery of LGR transition, in an efficient and effective way within the resources allocated.</p> <p>To work with the Senior Leadership Team and service delivery partners to ensure that services provided meet the Council's priorities through effective service delivery and that there is a safe transition of services to the new unitary council.</p> <p>In addition, the role will act as an ambassador for the Council and will build and maintain successful relationships with stakeholders, partners, and the community. The role will work with partners in the Thames Valley on the devolution agenda with the aim of establishing a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services is a statutory appointment under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act (1989), section 4.</p> |
| <b>Key Tasks and Responsibilities:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic and visible leadership of the council, acting as an ambassador for the West Oxfordshire District while ensuring the successful and effective delivery of all council services through a period of LGR.</li> <li>● You will focus delivering the Council's set key priorities, and leading the transition of the Council into a new Unitary Council.</li> <li>● You will provide timely advice to elected Members on major policy issues in support of Member decision-making, in a genuinely Member-led Council.</li> <li>● You will work with elected Members to ensure an appropriate policy framework that reflects the aspirations of the Council and positions the Council effectively for LGR.</li> <li>● You will create an organisational climate where all members feel effectively supported.</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You will work with the Leader and Executive to promote the Council’s interests in our service delivery partnerships, in the County and in the regional and national role of District Councils, for the benefit of those who live, work and visit the West Oxfordshire District.</li> <li>● You will develop effective partnerships across the West Oxfordshire District and beyond to deliver LGR and to further the devolution agenda.</li> <li>● You will work with town and parish councils, civic societies and chambers of commerce to foster a new civic and community pride across the District, reflective of West Oxfordshire as a historic area of outstanding natural beauty, and a great place to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.</li> <li>● In particular, you will champion the cyber economy and digital connectivity in the District, both to drive economic development and reduce the adverse impact of rural deprivation.</li> <li>● The Chief Executive is responsible for commissioning services provided for the Council by Publica. This includes services where Publica acts as the Council’s commissioning agent, principally waste and direct services by Ubico (shared Council service company) and leisure services .</li> <li>● The Chief Executive must ensure that Publica uphold their service delivery obligations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Supporting the Council to deliver its ambitions,</li> <li>➢ Continuously improving services,</li> <li>➢ Operating in a commercial manner and delivering on-going financial benefits to the Council,</li> <li>➢ Provision of data and insight to improve decision and policy making,</li> <li>➢ Top quality expert advice and support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The Chief Executive will be Head of Paid Service for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.</li> <li>● The Chief Executive is accountable to the Leader of the Council and the Full Council and shall report to the Performance and Appointments on performance.</li> <li>● As Head of Paid Service, the Chief Executive is responsible for the performance management of senior staff, ensuring that they have work programmes and targets and that appropriate appraisal systems are in place.</li> <li>● The Chief Executive shall ensure that all actions and functions of the Council, whosoever they are provided by, are fully compliant with all relevant legislation relating to health, safety and welfare at work, the public sector equalities duty and other relevant legislation.</li> </ul> <p>The Chief Executive shall comply with / ensure compliance with the Council’s Code of Conduct for Officers, the Council’s Data Protection Policies and the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.</p> <p>The responsibilities outlined are not intended to totally encompass or define all tasks that may be required of the post-holder. The outline of responsibilities given above may, therefore, be varied by agreement with the Leader of the Council, through the Chief Executive’s annual performance plan, without materially changing either the character or level of responsibility or grade.</p> |
| <p><b>Essential Requirements – Knowledge, Qualifications, Skills,</b></p> | <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A relevant qualification to Degree level and or 5 years relevant experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Specialist Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A thorough understanding of the issues and priorities of Local Government, Devolution, and Local Government Reorganisation</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>Abilities and Experience:</b></p>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to continued personal and professional development.</li> <li>• Local government political framework and processes including relevant legislation</li> <li>• Trends in Local Government service delivery.</li> <li>• In depth understanding of Local Government, particularly around the organisation of the public sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>Experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In depth experience at a senior management level of successfully managing a range of functions and services in a dynamic and complex environment.</li> <li>• Successful programme/project delivery within and across an organisation and between organisations.</li> <li>• Operating successfully as a senior manager in a dynamic, complex, multi-disciplinary environment</li> <li>• Experience of developing cross-sector partnerships working both as a contributor and in a leadership role</li> <li>• Experience of working in a large and diverse workforce, managing complex and budgets, assets and other resources</li> <li>• Experience in preparing, managing and controlling substantial budgets effectively.</li> <li>• Understanding of and a demonstrable commitment to partnership working within and between organisations locally, regionally and nationally.</li> <li>• Experience of high level strategic planning and the delivery of high quality services to meet local needs.</li> <li>• Experience of managing significant transition or transformation programmes,</li> <li>• Ability to encourage innovation and new approaches whilst managing risk.</li> <li>• Ability to identify the key matters that will affect the Council and the District in the future and develop strategies to meet them.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate political sensitivity and awareness.</li> <li>• Commitment to and understanding of the democratic and political processes of Local Government.</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to build consensus, persuade, negotiate and influence without direct line management or control of resources.</li> <li>• To innovate, design and implement strategies and policies across the organisation and working in partnership.</li> <li>• Excellent communication and presentation skills to enhance the reputation of the leadership and of the Council. Essential</li> <li>• Ability to use effectively a number of different leadership styles</li> <li>• Ability to handle conflict and manage sensitive issues within the organisation and between stakeholders and partners to achieve positive outcomes.</li> <li>• Ability to create an environment of trust, fairness and openness.</li> <li>• Ability to develop purposeful partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Numerate and financially astute being able to operate in a challenging financial environment</li> <li>• Excellent interpersonal skills.</li> <li>• Ability to contribute to wider local government and public sector initiatives.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Desirable Requirements Qualifications, Skills and Abilities:</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Management Qualification</li> </ul>  |

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| <b>General Accountabilities:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The post holder is responsible for maintaining a safe work environment and ensuring as far as reasonably practicable that safe working practices are adopted by employees within this work environment.</li> <li>• Work in compliance with the Codes of Conduct, Regulations and policies of the council.</li> <li>• To support the response to a major incident, including taking up a lead designated role within the emergency management framework.</li> <li>• To take a lead role in the undertaking and administering of election responsibilities</li> </ul>           |                       |  |
| <b>Special Conditions:</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will be expected to work reasonable additional hours in line with the needs of the service.</li> <li>• There may be a requirement to work at other locations to meet the needs of the business.</li> <li>• Full UK Driving Licence.</li> <li>• Ability to travel / access to a vehicle for work purposes.</li> <li>• Politically restricted postholders are restricted from canvassing on behalf of a political party or for a person who is, or seeks to be, a candidate for election to a local authority, the House of Commons, or the European Parliament.</li> </ul> |                       |  |
| <b>Date Reviewed:</b>            | February 2026  | <b>Reviewed By:</b>   | Leader of the Council, Cllr<br>Andy Graham |
| <b>Checked by HRBP</b>           | Kathryn Dowell   | <b>Date of Issue:</b> | February 2026                              |