



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	FULL COUNCIL – 25 FEBRUARY 2026
Subject	CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer and Electoral Returning Officer Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Kathryn Dowell, Strategic People Lead Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
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 st June 2026 until the 31 st 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: Approve the appointment and salary of Philip Martin as Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) of West Oxfordshire District Council from 1 st June 2026 until the 31 st 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/ 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

Performance and Appointments Committee agreed a panel of three members to interview candidates and make a recommendation to Council.

Appropriate HR and governance advice was sought to ensure compliance with statutory and constitutional requirements.

As per the process for the agreement of reports being presented at Full Council, this report has been circulated to and agreed as follows:

Director of Governance and Regulatory Services

Director of Finance Services

Head of Legal Services

In line with legal requirements the Council's Executive Members were consulted on the proposed appointment.

As this was an internal appointment process for a statutory role, wider public consultation was not required.

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)