

COUNCIL

DATE	26 th March 2026
REPORT OF	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills
SUBJECT	Appointment of Permanent Chief Executive/ Head of Paid Service
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

A permanent appointment of a Chief Executive is critical to delivering the Council Plan, strengthening organisational resilience, and ensuring effective leadership during a period of continued sector uncertainty and the emerging Local Government Reorganisation landscape. This appointment secures the senior capacity required to maintain momentum and provide clear strategic direction for the organisation and its partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks Full Council approval to appoint Sharon Wroot to the roles of Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, and Electoral Registration Officer, following the conclusion of the recruitment process agreed by the Appointments Committee.

Following a national recruitment campaign and robust assessment process, the Appointments Committee unanimously determined that Sharon Wroot was the strongest candidate following a full Committee interview and assessment process. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the approval and ratification of the appointment now rests with Full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Full Council:

1. Approves the appointment of Sharon Wroot as
 - Chief Executive
 - Head of Paid Service (Section 4 LGHA 1989)
 - Returning Officer
 - Electoral Registration Officer
2. Notes that the Appointments Committee reached a unanimous decision in identifying Sharon Wroot as the preferred candidate following a national recruitment campaign and formal interview process on 10 March 2026.

3. Authorises the Assistant Director – People & Organisational Development to finalise the necessary employment arrangements in accordance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

REASONS FOR DECISION

A decision is required to confirm the appointment to the Council's most senior officer role and its associated statutory duties. The recruitment process was undertaken in line with the Appointments Committee's agreed approach, balancing transparency, governance expectations and organisational stability.

The Committee concluded unanimously that:

- Sharon Wroot demonstrated exceptional leadership capability,
- provided a clear and compelling vision for the organisation,
- showed strong understanding of the local context and future challenges, and
- offered the most robust and credible evidence of readiness to lead the Council through the next period of transformation and sector change.

Given ongoing pressures in the local government environment and the need for stable executive leadership, securing a permanent appointment at pace was essential.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 Following the Appointments Committee meeting on 19 January 2026, Members agreed that an external recruitment process should be undertaken as a matter of principle—ensuring openness, competition, and market testing.

1.2 The recruitment process included:

A two-week national advertisement campaign across sector relevant platforms.

1.2.1 A long list and shortlisting exercise aligned to the established CEO role profile, undertaken by the Appointments Committee.

1.2.2. A formal Committee interview panel conducted by the Appointments Committee on 10 March 2026, supported by structured questions, presentation assessment, and scoring matrices.

1.3 Following the conclusion of interviews, Members of the Appointments Committee reached a unanimous view that Sharon Wroot was the strongest candidate.

1.4 The Committee resolved to recommend her appointment to Full Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and salary structure in appendix 1.

1.5 The Committee confirmed that its assessment was based wholly on merit,

evidence, and the statutory requirement that all appointments must be fair and transparent.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 Appointing a permanent Chief Executive reduces organisational risk, stabilises senior leadership capacity, and supports resilience during a period of national uncertainty in the sector.
- 2.2 The recruitment process was conducted in line with equality and fairness requirements. No adverse equality impacts were identified.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1. Not appointing or extending interim arrangements was rejected, as continued uncertainty at Chief Executive level would weaken organisational stability, impact strategic delivery, and reduce the Council's influence in regional and LGR related discussions.
- 3.2. A longform executive search process was considered but dismissed due to cost, market conditions, and extended timescales, which would likely leave the Council without a permanent Head of Paid Service until late 2026.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

A timely, transparent and robust appointment supports confidence among staff, partners and stakeholders. Communications will be coordinated to ensure clarity on the decision and statutory responsibilities associated with the role.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Chief Executive post is an established role within the approved budget. Recruitment costs were contained within existing resources.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising

8. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising

9. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

There has been no consultation with Scrutiny, as the politically balanced

Appointments Committee has directly shaped and supported the above activity.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Post is within establishment and budget envelope

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Full Council is required to approve the appointment and designate the Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

11.2 The Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer are statutory posts required under electoral legislation and must be designated to an appropriate officer of the authority.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The selection process complied with all requirements for a merit-based appointment. Any consequential adjustments to interim arrangements or senior capacity will be managed through the normal HR and governance processes.

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards are affected.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

15. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Victoria Leach, Assistant Director People and Organisational Development.

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON, LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR
ECONOMY, REGENERATION, DEVOLUTION AND SKILLS**

Designation	Level	Salary Range
Director 1	Tier 1	£103,220 - £108,360
Director 2		£129,000 - £134,160
DCS		£144, 480 - £149,640
Deputy CEO		£149,640 - £154,800
CEO		£175,440 - £180,600