

Agenda

Employment Panel

Date: **Wednesday 22 October 2025**

Time: **10.00 am**

Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford,
HR4 0LE**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Jen Preece, democratic services officer on 01432 261699 or e-mail jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the Employment Panel

Membership

Chairperson **Councillor Jonathan Lester**
Vice-chairperson **Councillor Diana Toynbee**

Councillor Terry James
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Pete Stoddart
Councillor Clare Davies

Agenda

Pages

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

To receive details of any member nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the panel.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations of interests in respect of items on the agenda.

4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive any written questions from members of the public.

Details of the scheme and related guidance are available here:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200148/your_council/61/get_involved

Please submit questions to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk

The deadline for the receipt of questions is Thursday 16 October 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive any written questions from councillors.

Please submit questions to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk

The deadline for the receipt of questions is Thursday 16 October 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Accepted questions will be published as a supplement prior to the meeting.

6. RECRUITMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

To initiate the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive.

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The public's rights to information and attendance at meetings

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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions. Thank you for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings safe.

You have a right to:

- Attend all council, cabinet, committee and sub-committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings
- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all councillors with details of the membership of cabinet and of all committees and sub-committees. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the council, cabinet, committees and sub-committees and to inspect documents.

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The reporting of meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the reporting to ensure that they comply.

The council may make a recording of this public meeting or stream it live to the council's website. Such recordings form part of the record of the meeting and are made available for members of the public via the council's YouTube channel.

Public transport links

The Herefordshire Council office at Plough Lane is located off Whitecross Road in Hereford, approximately 1 kilometre from the City Bus Station.

The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services-

The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Title of report: Recruitment of the Chief Executive

Meeting: Employment Panel

Meeting date: Wednesday 22 October 2025

Report by: Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To initiate the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) Recruitment for the post of Chief Executive is initiated in line with the estimated timescales set out in the report.
- b) Employment Panel approves the role profile in appendix A, subject to any agreed amendments.
- c) Employment Panel agrees the remuneration for the post of Chief Executive.

Alternative options

1. Employment panel might decide not to recruit to the post of Chief Executive at this time. This option is not recommended because it is important the council has effective strategic leadership in place.
2. Employment panel might wish to consider alternative models of leadership for the council in England. Whilst most local authorities appoint a Chief Executive it is not a statutory requirement to do so. For the reasons set out in this report, this option is not recommended.

Key considerations

3. The council's Chief Executive has announced he is leaving the council at the end of the financial year and in accordance with part 4, section 9 of the council's constitution, Employment Panel is responsible for the selection and recommendation of any new appointment to Council.
4. The Chief Executive is a critical role for the council and to ensure that the right candidate is found it is recommended that a specialist employment agency with the necessary skills, networks and resources to 'head hunt' a field of qualified candidates is engaged to undertake the search.
5. Part 4, section 9 of the council's constitution sets out that employment panel will shortlist and interview candidates for the post of Chief Executive and will recommend their preferred candidate to Council for approval.
6. A selection process and draft timeline in which an appointment can be made is proposed below. The timetable is designed to avoid any meaningful recruitment activities taking place over Christmas, and to give Employment Panel multiple opportunities to assess the candidates.

When (estimate)	Activity	Lead
October 2025	Select and brief agency	Director of HR&OD
13 November - 17 December	Candidate search	Agency
15 January	Longlisting Employment panel to longlist up to 8 candidates for selection day 1.	Employment Panel
w/c 19 January	Psychometrics and 121 calls with candidates and the Leader	Agency and the Leader
28 January	Selection Day 1 and shortlisting Includes technical interview and presentation to Employment Panel After which Employment Panel will decide which candidates (approx. 4) to bring back for day 2.	Employment Panel
4 February	Selection day 2 and final interviews Includes staff panel, stakeholder panel, lunch with candidates and final interviews with Employment Panel.	Employment Panel
5 February, 2 PM	Formal Employment Panel meeting for decision	Employment Panel
w/c 16 February	Council meeting to vote on recommended candidate.	All members

Salary

7. The remuneration for this post is currently set at £174,377 and this salary has been approved by Council in the pay policy statement in February 2025. In accordance with guidance under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's constitution, any new salary packages over £100,000 must be agreed by Council. If Employment Panel decides to change the salary for this post, it can do so by recommending an alternative salary package to Council.
8. To support Employment Panel in their considerations, a salary benchmarking exercise has been undertaken. For benchmarking purposes there is not a direct comparator, but nearby councils and smaller county councils have been considered.
9. The current salary for Herefordshire Council's Chief Executive is in the lower quartile and it is noted that the relative size of Herefordshire council in terms of headcount and population is also in the lower quartile.

Role Profile

10. The council's constitution states that the Chief Executive will be the head of paid service and returning officer for all local and national elections.
11. An updated, draft role profile is attached in appendix A and it includes these responsibilities.

Alternative Leadership Models

12. There are examples in other councils where alternative models of leadership have been put in place. These include rotating the role of Chief Executive between some or all of the directors or having no Chief Executive at all.
13. Most local authorities that have implemented alternative models have done so without success and have reverted to a chief executive model at the first opportunity. Notwithstanding the experiences of other local authorities, a fundamental change to the leadership model in Herefordshire could be destabilising at a time when effective and consistent leadership is critical.
14. The post of Chief Executive is established in the council's constitution, and the constitution also specifies that the Chief Executive is the head of paid service. Should Employment Panel decide to recommend substantive changes to Chief Executive and head of paid service function, those changes would need to be considered at Council.

Community impact

15. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the council needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, qualifications, and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively. The council is accountable for how it uses the resources under its stewardship, including accountability for outputs and outcomes achieved. In addition, the council has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies.
16. The post holder for this role provides strategic leadership to council services and has key leadership roles in Herefordshire, regionally and nationally. Without effective leadership, outcomes for communities and individuals in Herefordshire could be adversely affected.

Environmental Impact

17. The council's senior leaders have shared responsibility for the delivery of the county plan and corporate delivery plan and the inherent environmental objectives and outcomes within these plans.

Equality duty

18. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
19. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision and it has been found to have no impact for equality.
20. The council's policies in relation to job evaluation and recruitment and selection pay full regard to the council's responsibilities as set out in the public sector equality duty. The council is a disability confident employer, and the council encourages applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Resource implications

21. The salary for the Chief Executive is currently £174,377 and will be met from within the existing directorate revenue budget.
22. The establishment budget is available for this post and the table below show the salary cost of appointing to these posts for a full year, together with any estimated recruitment costs.

Revenue budget implications	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
Salary for post of Chief Executive (full year, excluding any pay award which has not yet been announced)	-	174
Estimated Recruitment Costs	20	0
TOTAL	20	174

Legal implications

23. The council is required to appoint one of its officers as head of paid service as prescribed in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The council's constitution sets out that the head of paid service will be the Chief Executive (Part 2 Article 10 para 2.10.7).
24. Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, SI 2001/3384 as amended by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, SI 2015/881 say that where executive arrangements (Cabinet/Leader model) are in place, the appointment of chief officers and statutory chief officers and deputy chief officers, including their dismissal and the terms and conditions upon which they are appointed, is a function reserved to the Council. In the constitution this function is delegated to the Employment Panel (Part 4 Section 9 para 4.9.4 to 4.9.10). An offer of appointment for the post of chief executive and head of paid service, cannot be

made until the appointment has first been approved by full council (Part 3 Section 1 point 27- Council Functions).

25. Where cabinet executive arrangements are in place, before an offer of appointment is issued, the members of the Cabinet must be informed of the prospective decision, and the Leader may make any representations of 'material and well founded' objections to the decision maker (the council).
26. Any employee employed by the council must be employed on the council's normal terms and conditions and will be subject to all relevant policies and procedures as any other employee would be.
27. Any changes to the pay packages must be approved by full Council (Part 3 Section 1 point 29) and changes to terms and conditions must be approved by Employment Panel (Part 3 Section 1 point 28).

Risk management

28.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The council will not be able to recruit a Chief Executive and will not have adequate leadership in place to deliver key council priorities.	This risk has been mitigated by proposing a specialist recruitment agency is engaged to undertake a national search for the right candidate.

Consultees

29. None.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft role profile

Appendix B – Salary benchmarking information

Background papers

None identified.



APPENDIX A: Role Profile - Chief Executive

Role purpose

To provide strategic leadership to the council, ensuring that the policy objectives and priorities of the administration are put into operation by the council as efficiently, effectively and economically as possible.

Through leadership and development of strategic partnerships across Herefordshire and beyond, ensure the development of shared commitment and capacity to provide high quality public services to people living and working in, or visiting, Herefordshire.

Accountabilities specific to this role

1. Take lead responsibility for the overall strategic and operational management of the council, monitoring performance against plans to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services to the highest standards, including financial, performance, risk, people and change management. This includes performing the statutory role of 'head of paid service'.
2. Develop and sustain a positive and enabling organisational culture that puts at its heart the provision of good quality, value for money services and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the organisation to deliver successfully against the council's ambitions and priorities
3. Provide first class inspirational leadership to the council by creating the working environment where employees can deliver their best. Pro-actively manage the culture & values of the council by being a respected role model and leader.
4. Set and manage ambitious performance expectations for everyone recognising excellence and challenging those who under-perform. Create an environment where learning, innovation and the application of new ideas flourish resulting in significant improvements to service delivery.
5. Working with the Leader of the council develop an effective collaborative working relationship between the organisational and political structures of the council and provide an appropriate framework to act as a focal point for member and management input on policy issues.
6. Support Members by providing the highest quality advice and guidance on all matters relating to the council's functions and services. Ensure Members are appraised about issues to enable informed decision making in line with the council's vision and ensuring high standards of internal governance so that policies are agreed and implemented.
7. Ensure the successful delivery of the council's political priorities and lead the corporate leadership team to deliver the strategic direction as outlined by the elected leadership.
8. Develop and review the organisation's resources, partnership arrangements and practices to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.

9. Provide oversight to the develop of the council's budget setting process, management of its in year budget, setting a clear focus for the leadership team in delivering required savings, and understanding and managing cost pressures.
10. Create and manage effective partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, building support among them in order to deliver better public services and improved results for local people.
11. Be a strong advocate for the county and represent the organisation, its aims and achievements to stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally.
12. Manage relationships with partners and providers ensuring that services designed and shaped by commissioners are effectively planned and put into operation.
13. Forge a broad network of contacts across the public and private sector to maintain awareness of best practices and initiatives, adapting them for use within the council to create efficiencies and cost savings.
14. Promote, develop, and maintain good relationships with the media and public and ensure an effective communication strategy both internal and external to the organisation.
15. Ensure that the council has appropriate governance and regulatory systems and controls in place which are adhered to, and which are modern, flexible, fit for purpose and proportionate.
16. Undertake on call responsibilities including participation in the council's GOLD emergency planning on call rota.
17. This position has been identified as a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Statutory Duties

1. The post holder fulfils the statutory functions of Head of Paid Service.
2. The post holder is the council's designated Proper Officer for all statutory 'proper officer' functions.
3. The post holder fulfils the functions of Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer/Acting Returning Officer (these functions are fulfilled independently of the council).
4. The post holder fulfils the functions of Clerk to the Lieutenancy.

Skills, knowledge and experience

1. Substantial record of successful senior strategic leadership and corporate management in a similar, large and complex organisation.

2. Evidence of developing a culture of high performance which puts customers first and empowers and values colleagues, as well as setting objective measures to ensure the provision of quality services.
3. The ability to work effectively and impartially with elected Members in supporting the democratic decision making process with the political acumen and skills to develop positive and respectful working relationships with elected Members, fostering respect, trust and confidence.
4. Evidence of success in leading major organisational and cultural transformation to create high performance in a complex and demanding environment.
5. The skills and credibility to provide visible leadership to deliver outcomes for residents, customers and stakeholders, while empowering, enabling, motivating and developing the council's workforce and fostering a positive organisational culture.
6. Experience of successful management and implementation of complex policy issues, leading organisational and/or cultural change in order to achieve successful outcomes.
7. Experience of representing an organisation at a regional and national level on a range of strategic agendas.
8. Significant and successful involvement in the promotion and maintenance of the corporate reputation of an organisation.
9. Successful and extensive experience of the strategic development, management and control of large complex financial plans and budgets, including the evaluation of competing priorities.
10. A successful track record of forging and maintaining working partnerships with communities to ensure the development, design and delivery of services that reflects their needs.
11. Able to communicate a compelling vision to key stakeholders internally and externally to achieve operational outcomes.
12. Commitment to, and ability to visibly demonstrate the council's values and behaviours.
13. A strong commitment to the value of public service, local democratic processes and furthering the interests of the rural county of Herefordshire.



Appendix B - Salary Benchmarking

Regional Councils			
Council	Population	Employees (excluding schools)	CEX salary (taken from most recently published pay policy statement or 24/25 accounts)
Herefordshire	192,214	1525	£168,970 (2024/25 salary for comparison)
Shropshire	323,600	5700	£171,321
Stoke	260,000	4195	£183,473
Worcestershire	609,000	2,755	£201,549
Gloucestershire	659,276	4356	£195,048
Staffordshire	874,190	3681	£205,450
Warwickshire	568,167	4569	£209,745
Dudley	323,495	2129	£195,792
Sandwell	326,722	4163	£201,566
Wolverhampton	260,000	4347	£191,626
Walsall	294,800	3024	£193,615
Solihull	216,240	2778	£190,957
Smaller County Councils			
Rutland	42,000	449	£148,822
Cumberland Council	273,000	4,500	£182,391
Westmorland and Furness Council	230,000	3,500	£182,391
Somerset	571,600	3,899	£206,870
Devon	830,000	5,281	£212,175
Cornwall	583,289	5420	£201,661
Northumberland	324,000	5096	£212,489
East Sussex	558,626	5025	£221,549
Oxfordshire	750,200	5,378	£238,697
Norfolk	916,200	7,285	£209,000

