

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

09 July 2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION - INCREASING STRATEGIC CAPACITY

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Remuneration Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- i. Note the establishment of the temporary roles of Programme Director – Local Government Reorganisation and Programme Director – Devolution.
- ii. Note the remits of the job descriptions enclosed at Annex A.

Executive Summary

1. Oxfordshire County Council is facing significant, externally driven change to its present form and future functions. This report outlines the need to increase the capacity and capability of the organisation to meet those challenges now, and in the future, through a number of fixed term programme director posts.

Background

2. In April 2024, Remuneration Committee endorsed a significant restructure to the senior leadership of the County Council to ensure that, through the right structure, it can deliver effective, outcome-based, responsive services to our residents, whilst ensuring the organisation moves towards becoming more financially sustainable.
3. The local government sector has never before faced such a perfect storm of revenue and capital spending reductions, increased volume, and complexity of demand across many of its services and a turbulent, uncertain external political, economic, and environmental context. Within this unprecedented context, it is invidious to think that councils can remain static and rely on the same organisational and leadership models which have characterised the sector for many decades.
4. Since April 2024, this external political context has shifted, significantly, with the publication of the Devolution White Paper in December 2024 which brings to an end the 'two tier' system of local government and seeks to 'complete the map' of England by bringing Strategic Authorities to every part of country. To that end, and to ensure existing service delivery / 'business as usual' leadership arrangements, two fixed term programme director roles have been established one with responsibility for local government reorganisation and the other with responsibility for devolution. Both roles are for a two-year period, with the potential to extend by one further year, depending on the timing of the creation of a new Mayoral Combined Authority and new unitary council or councils in Oxfordshire.

- Both posts have been externally evaluated by Korn Ferry, and have been evaluated at Senior Leader, Level 3 as set out below.

Grade/Role Profile	scp1	scp2	scp3	scp4	scp5
Senior Leader, Level 3	£110,000	£112,500	£115,000	£117,500	£120,000

- It should be noted that in accordance with terms and conditions, a cost of living pay award is due from 1 April 2025, which is still to be agreed nationally and will be backdated to 1 April 2025 when implemented.
- The appointments to the Director roles and pay scales will be made on JNC for Chief Officers terms and conditions.

Governance Arrangements

- There are local government employment rules that govern the appointment of statutory chief officers, non-statutory chief officers, and deputy chief officers. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, SI 2001/3384 provides that the power to discharge powers in relation to staff (which would include the above named appointments) should be set out in standing orders. Those standing orders are contained in the Council Constitution, specifically at Part 8.4 the Officer Employment Procedure Rules.
- Section 5 of Part 8.4 provides that the Head of Paid Service will make such interim arrangements for the appointment of officers including chief officers to interim posts as may be necessary from time to time to ensure that the statutory functions of the council are adequately fulfilled, subject to consultation with both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Remuneration Committee.
- The Programme Director – Devolution will report directly to the Chief Executive Officer and is a non-statutory chief officer. The Programme Director – LGR reports directly to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer and is a non-statutory deputy chief officer.
- This Policy will be refreshed to reflect the changes outlined in the report and any other changes, if any, that have been made over the course of the year.

Financial Implications

- In January 2025 Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold funding to support the development of reorganisation and devolution proposals for Oxfordshire and an initial contribution of £5.0m. A further contribution of £5.0m, increasing the total to £10.0m, was agreed by Cabinet in March 2025.
- The cost of these temporary roles will be met from this reserve.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

14. By virtue of the relevant legislation and the Council Constitution the Head of Paid Service has authority to create the two fixed-term posts in response to the forthcoming constitutional changes. The two roles have been designated as non-statutory chief officers, in accordance with s.2(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 these are politically restricted posts.
15. Due consideration has been given to suitable remuneration for the positions, and they have been externally evaluated by Korn Ferry thereby mitigating any potential equal pay risk.

Comments checked by:

Stephen Woodman
Solicitor - Employment

Employee Implications

16. This recruitment process has been undertaken using the agreed recruitment processes including job evaluation and fair advertisement of these roles on an internal basis.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

17. None immediately arising from this report.

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