



# COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL - 26 NOVEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPOINTMENT OF PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (HEAD OF PAID SERVICE), RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL RETURNING OFFICER</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Every, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.every@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge – Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) Email: <a href="mailto:angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk">angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Angela Claridge – Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) Email: <a href="mailto:angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk">angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk</a> Cheryl Sloan – Assistant Director, Workforce Strategy and Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk">cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	The purpose of this report is to approve the recommendation of the Performance and Appointments Committee that the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer is appointed on a permanent basis from 1 January 2026.
Annexes	N/A
Recommendation(s)	Council is recommended by the Performance and Appointments Committee to:  1. Appoint Jane Portman to the role of permanent Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 January 2026 on an annual salary of £140,000 with an additional one-off



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	<p>allowance of up to £8,000.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 1 January 2026.</li><li>3. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Returning Officer for the purposes of Section 35 of the Representation of the Peoples Act (1983) and Regulation 4 of the Parish &amp; Community Meeting (Polls) Rules (1987).</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	All
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Leader of the Council Members of the Cabinet. Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer Assistant Director Workforce Planning and Transformation Recruitment Manager</p>



## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** The Performance and Appointments Committee has responsibility for all relevant matters relating to the salaries and contractual terms of the Chief Executive Officer / Head of Paid Service.
- 1.2** Following the announcement that the previous Chief Executive Officer was leaving the Council on 30 June 2025, the Performance & Appointments Committee (PAC), at its meeting held on 18 June 2025, agreed to commence the process of appointing an interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. The role was proposed to be for a period of up to 9 months to ensure the Council's statutory duties were fulfilled and to provide sufficient time for a permanent appointment to be made.
- 1.3** Following the meeting on 18 June 2025, a Selection Panel was formed from Members of the Performance and Appointments Committee to undertake interviews for the interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) who also undertakes the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.4** The Head of HR and the Council Leader sought suitable candidates for the role from the Local Government Association, Local Government East of England Talent Bank and internally. After an initial short-listing, interviews were conducted by the Selection Panel, and an interim appointment was recommended by the PAC.
- 1.5** At the Extraordinary Council meeting on 26 June 2025, the following recommendations were resolved:
  1. Approve the recommendation of the Performance & Appointments Committee that the person named in Annex A be appointed as Chief Executive Officer/Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer for a period of up to 9 months from 1 July 2025 or the date of commencement in post of a permanent Chief Executive Officer, whichever is earlier, to ensure the Council's statutory duties are fulfilled and provide sufficient time for a permanent appointment to be made.
  2. Appoint the interim Chief Executive Officer as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, from 1 July 2025 until a permanent Chief Executive Officer is appointed.
  3. Approve the recommendation of the Selection Panel that the candidate, whose profile is shown in Annex A, is appointed as Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service), Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 1 July 2025 or as soon as practically possible after that date.



4. Appoint, in the event that the interim Chief Executive Officer is unable to take up the role with effect from 1 July, 2025, David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer to undertake the role of Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until such time as the interim Chief Executive Officer is available to take up the role.
  5. Authorise the Head of HR to commence the process of appointing a permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.6** The Council is advised that the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer commenced employment on 1 July 2025, so point 4 of the above recommendations was not enacted.
- 1.7** On 6 November 2025, the PAC met to consider point 5 of the recommendations; the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.8** This report sets out the considerations made by the PAC and the recommendations proposed for Council to resolve.

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

- 2.1** When considering the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer for Cotswold District Council, the PAC considered a number of points to help inform their recommendation to Council. These considerations included the following:
- As part of the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), new unitary structures are scheduled to be established on 1 April 2028 (vesting day). Whilst this appointment is to a permanent position, the role of Chief Executive Officer for CDC will cease to exist on vesting day.
  - The projected cost of undertaking an external recruitment process is approximately £27,000, with an anticipated duration of up to nine months, inclusive of the successful candidate's notice period.
  - Risks associated with an external recruitment process and whether the limited tenure of this role reduces its appeal in the employment market. Recruitment to statutory officers in local government is challenging due to their significant accountability for governance, compliance and financial probity together with the requirement for a mix of technical and strategic leadership skills.



- Should a recruitment process prove unsuccessful and interim arrangements be required, the estimated cost of engaging an interim Chief Executive is in the region of £1,000 to £1,500 per day.
- Maintaining the continuity and stability established by the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer is essential following a period of significant change. This includes the transition from Publica, change in Chief Executive Officer and Council Leader and the uncertainty arising from LGR.
- Employees and elected members have expressed positive feedback regarding the Interim Chief Executive, noting the stability, strong leadership and effective delivery of Council priorities during this period.
- The experience and track record the Interim Chief Executive Officer brings to CDC in successfully delivering Council priorities and delivering LGR, having been instrumental in the creation of two unitary councils in previous roles.
- Discussions with the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer as to whether, if offered the role permanently, this would be accepted.

- 2.2** Taking all of the above factors into account and following confirmation from the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer of her interest in the role - subject to a review of terms and conditions - a salary benchmarking exercise was undertaken.
- 2.3** The benchmarking exercise took into consideration average Chief Executive Officer salaries in Gloucestershire, data provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) for the South-West region and for England as a whole, and the CDC Pay Policy which states that statutory officers' individual posts are graded via benchmarking exercises.
- 2.4** The benchmarking exercise also took into consideration remuneration packages which are normally offered for roles at this level. In accordance with Council's Relocation Policy, the role of Chief Executive Officer would be within scope for a relocation allowance which is an allowance of up to £8,000 payable on qualifying expenditure such as removal expenses, conveyancing and legal fees, temporary accommodation costs.
- 2.5** The relocation allowance is normally only payable if the individual is relocating to a sole permanent residence in the area. Due to LGR the Interim Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service) and Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer will not be relocating on a permanent basis (due to the short-term nature) but will either



purchase a second home or rent until vesting day to enable the majority of time to be spent working from the Trinity Road offices. It is therefore considered appropriate that an allowance of up to £8,000 maximum, as set out in the Relocation Policy, is included in the terms and conditions for appointment. All other terms and conditions are agreed nationally as part of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Chief Executives including the annual cost of living pay increase.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1** Having considered the points detailed under point 2.1 and the outcomes from the benchmarking exercise on remuneration, the Council is recommended by the Performance and Appointments Committee to:
1. Appoint Jane Portman to the role of permanent Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1 January 2026 on an annual salary of £140,000 with an additional one-off allowance of up to £8,000.
  2. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Head of Paid Service for the purposes of Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 1 January 2026.
  3. Appoint Jane Portman as the Council's Returning Officer for the purposes of Section 35 of the Representation of the Peoples Act (1983) and Regulation 4 of the Parish & Community Meeting (Polls) Rules (1987).
- 3.2** Although the proposed salary sits towards the upper end of the range for Chief Executive Officers in Gloucestershire, below for Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council, it is considered appropriate. This reflects the CEO experience that the incumbent brings, the wealth of experience in LGR, the current market situation, the short-term nature of the role, prevailing interim market rates and ensuring continuity for our council and employees.
- 3.3** These terms are acceptable to the Interim Chief Executive Officer.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1** As set out in Part C2 of the Council's constitution, it is the responsibility of Full Council to *"confirm the appointment of the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) and designate officers as the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer"*.
- 4.2** Part C3 of the Constitution sets out the responsibility of the Performance & Appointments Committee to *"consider all relevant matters relating to the salaries*



*and contractual terms of the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and Statutory Officers”.*

- 4.3** As set out in the Council's 2025/26 Pay Policy Statement, approved by Council at its meeting on 19 March 2025, Full Council has the responsibility for appointing any officer where the salary package exceeds £100,000 per annum. The Interim Chief Executive Officer's salary package is currently £130,000 and the recommendation is to increase this to £140,000.
- 4.4** Given the interim nature of the role, an annual salary of £140,000 with an additional one-off allowance of up to £8,000 is recommended.
- 4.5** Therefore, an additional budget allocation of £60,000 is required in the current financial year (2025/26) funded from vacancy savings of £20,000 and £40,000 from the contingency budget held to mitigate in-year expenditure risks.
- 4.6** The additional budget requirement from 2026/27 of £40,000 will be included in the 2026/27 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) that will be considered by Cabinet and Council in February 2026.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** There is a statutory duty to appoint a Head of Paid Service, and this is covered in the recommendations. By virtue of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, as amended, the Council must include in its procedural rules that an offer of appointment as the Head of Paid Service is subject to the approval of Full Council. The Chief Executive Officer is designated as Head of Paid Service under Section 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Before an offer of appointment may be made, the Regulations also require that the Council must ensure that each member of the Council's Cabinet is notified of the proposed appointment and given the opportunity to object to the proposed appointment. Cabinet Members will be consulted following the publication of this report and the outcome of that consultation will be reported to the Council at its meeting on 26 November.

## **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1** As set out in the main body of the report, the Council is legally obliged to designate an officer to fulfil the role of Head of Paid Service. Approving the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer fulfils this requirement.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**



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

**8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**9.1** None.