
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	13 February 2025
Report By:	Morna Rae Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications	Report No:	IC/02/25/MR
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Subject:	Chief Executive Recruitment Process		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to approve the procedure for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive. An executive recruitment agency has been procured to support the process. They have provided recommendations on the procedure and these options are presented for decision.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Council agrees to:

- The composition of the shortlisting and recruitment panels, with 7 Elected Members on the panels, and
- Notes the Assessment Centre process.

Morna Rae
Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 On 16 January the Chief Executive intimated her resignation to take up the position of Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire from 5 May 2025. Planning is therefore underway for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive and for interim arrangements.
- 3.2 At the meeting of Inverclyde Council on 23 January approval was given for:
- the engagement of an executive recruitment agency in relation to the recruitment of a new Chief Executive and recommendations on the process to be followed for appointment, and
 - a future report on the procedure to be followed for appointment.
- 3.3 Procurement arrangements have been progressed, and discussions have taken place with Aspen People, a specialist sector executive search organisation. Based on their experience of Chief Executive recruitment and benchmarking with other local authorities they have provided recommendations on the process to be followed. They will also provide external expertise through the involvement of an individual with local authority Chief Executive experience.

Current Process

- 3.4 The current Chief Executive recruitment process is detailed below:
- The shortlisting panel for the recruitment of Chief Executive should involve 6 Elected Members reflecting the political balance of the Council. The Council Leader will chair the panel, and all members will have equal voting rights.
 - Shortleeting for an interview will be based on the essential and desirable criteria for the post as set out in the person specification. The Shortleeting may go through several stages as candidates move through the recruitment process.
 - The use of a peer appraisal should be part of the process for Chief Officer appointments. This will provide additional information for the interview panel to consider and weigh in the balance when selecting the individual for appointment.
 - Consideration may also be given to the use of an assessment centre process (for example, occupational personality questionnaires).
 - The current Chief Executive provides advice to the panel.
 - The final stage in the process will be candidates attending a formal interview with all Elected Members of the Council (recruitment panel)
 - The format of the interview should involve candidates delivering a short presentation on a given topic, followed by a series of set questions.
 - Appointment of the Chief Executive will follow a secret ballot process, conducted in successive rounds until a majority of those present and voting is secured for one candidate.

Benchmarking

- 3.5 Benchmarking was undertaken on the approaches used by other Scottish local authorities. Of the twenty who responded only one other local authority holds the final interview of the selection process in front of the full Council.

Common themes in the various processes were:

- Groups of Elected Members reflecting political balance involved in shortleeting and final interview,
- Involvement of a wider group of Elected Members in an informal stage in which feedback is captured and given to recruitment panel, and
- Assessment Centres including psychometric testing, technical interviews, competence-based exercises, employee panels, Community Planning partner panels, and trade union panels.

Shortlisting and Recruitment Panel

- 3.6 It is suggested that the current Inverclyde Council process is refined to modernise it and bring it into line with other local authorities. This would involve the same Elected Member panel being involved in the shortlisting and final interview stages. It would reflect the Council make up. This would maintain Elected Members involvement in the process whilst ensuring a more proportionate approach. The Council Leader would chair the panel, and all members would have equal voting rights.

It is recommended that the panel is either:

1. Seven Elected Members; 3 Labour 2 SNP 1 Conservative 1 Independent, or
2. Five Elected Members; 2 Labour 1 SNP 1 Conservative 1 independent

If Elected Members agreed to this change, there could be additional Elected Member involvement through the Assessment Centre as outlined below.

Feedback from Aspen People on Assessment Centre

- 3.7 Aspen have advised that a good assessment centre at Chief Executive level includes solutions appropriate to both the role and the organisational culture. It will provide sound and rigorous benchmarks using assessments of competency, personality, values, motivation and interests. Therefore, the ideal makes up of an assessment centre would be to consider online assessments together with other exercises which can be centred on the skills and personal qualities considered relevant for the post. It is important to define the critical competencies that drive performance - at individual, functional and organisational levels. Ideally the assessment centre touches on all areas of the person specification exploring experience, skills, personal qualities and leadership competencies. In particular personality profiling can be mapped to leadership competencies which can in turn draw out the appropriate positive and negative characteristics. Other tools such as stakeholder and staff panels are helpful to assess other elements of leadership and relationship management.

The following are proposed for the assessment centre:

Personality Profiling - Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) provides an indication of an individual's preferred behavioural style at work. Leadership style can be extracted from the information and there is also the facility to determine team type based on Belbin scales. Personalities and style nuances derived from the OPQ would provide additional insights to a person and could be further substantiated at the assessment centre and/or final panel interview.

Stakeholder panel interview - A stakeholder panel is a great way to involve those with a vested interest in the role and the outcome. They would bring their varied experiences and viewpoints and candidates would feel more valued when interacting with a group that benefits from the organisation. It is a good test of communication and influencing skills and it could involve the candidate being presented with a scenario to analyse and present recommendations. A stakeholder is made up of partner agencies and Elected Members. The panel should be made up of representatives of Police Scotland, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, CVS, (who are statutory Community Planning partners) and Elected Members including 1 Labour 1 Conservative, 1 SNP and 1 Independent.

Staff panel interview – Team Fit - This element can help evaluate how well the candidate's personality, working style, and values align with the team's dynamics. Involving staff also fosters a sense of ownership and inclusion, boosting morale. Candidates often appreciate meeting potential colleagues, as it provides insights into team culture and work environment.

Crisis management exercise - This can be a good test of a candidate’s ability to handle business crises like financial downturns, PR disasters, or cyberattacks for example. The objective is to test a candidate’s personal resilience and communication skills and is particularly appropriate for public-facing CEO’s or high-profile posts. It can be done as a separate exercise, presentation to stakeholders or included in the panel questions.

Feedback from these elements would be collated and fed to the recruitment panel to inform their decision.

Options

3.8 Options presented for the panels are:

1. Continue with current process of 6 Elected Members on the shortlisting panel and all Elected Members involved at the final interview, or
2. Change to 7 Elected Members on the shortlisting panel and conducting final interview, or
3. Change to 5 Elected Members on the shortlisting panel and conducting final interview.

Options 2 and 3 are both recommended as being more in line with other Chief Executive appointment processes, and option 2 reflects the political balance of the existing Inverclyde Council 7 person committees.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 It is recommended that Council agrees to:

- The composition of the shortlisting and recruitment panels, with 7 Elected Members on the panels, and
- Notes the Assessment Centre process.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources	X	
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

The post and associated costs are contained within budget.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

5.3 Legal/Risk

Inverclyde Council requires a Head of Paid Service and approval of this report will mitigate risks in the delay of the recruitment process.

5.4 Human Resources

The human resources implications are as outlined in the report.

5.5 Strategic

This report supports delivery of the Council Plan outcome *High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money.*

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None