

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



Report to Council

Date of Meeting:	18 July 2019
Item Title:	Establishing a Salary for the Post of Programme Director: North Wales Economic Ambition Board
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen

DECISION SOUGHT

That the Council, as the Accountable Body for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's employment and financial matters, approves the Board's decision to set the salary level for the post of Programme Director at £96,304 - £106,304.

BACKGROUND AND REASONING

Gwynedd Council acts as the Accountable Body for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board. This means, for example, that this Council acts as the legal employer for Officers on behalf of the Board, is responsible for establishing the budget and producing accounts as well as providing support for meetings etc. This is done by means of a governance agreement, agreed upon by the six Councils and other partners.

The Ambition Board has now decided that it is time to appoint a Programme Director but its efforts to recruit over the past two months have been unsuccessful.

As a consequence, the Board, at its meeting on the 28th June 2019, agreed to re-advertise the post but by setting the salary at a level of up to £106,304. Guidance was received from Korn Ferry Consultants (previously Hay Group) prior to reaching this conclusion.

In order to meet the statutory guidance "Pay Accountability within Local Government in Wales – Guidance under Section 40 Localism Act 2011" and attending to the Local Authority Regulations (Standing Orders)(Wales) 2006, as amended in 2014, any salary package which is higher than £100,000 must be reported to Full Council and formal approval to establish the salary at the level noted must be received.

Since this Council acts as the Accountable Body for the Ambition Board, it is Gwynedd Council's responsibility to approve on this occasion in order to meet the technical requirements of the statutory guidance. In turn, it will be the Ambition Board's responsibility to fund the post and to deal with the recruitment procedure.

It is anticipated, on condition that formal approval is given, that the Ambition Board will re-start the recruiting process during the next few weeks with a view to appointing a Programme Director in September.

ANY CONSULTATIONS HELD BEFORE RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Statutory Officers Opinion

Monitoring Officer:

The report explains the context of this recommendation. It reflects a technical requirement found in the Guidance which traverses joint working arrangements within the current framework. Therefore the role of the Council as part of the partnership is to provide assurance for the Economic Ambition Board in relation to following appropriate procedures.

Head of Finance:

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board's intention is to establish the Programme Office's structure, including the vital role of the Programme Director, within the resource of the local authorities and other partners' core financial contributions. The cost of employing the Programme Director (and the remainder of the Programme Office) will be committed on the basis of pay capitalisation, partly funded by grant etc as set out in a report to a meeting of the Ambition Board on the 28th June.

Gwynedd Council's Statutory Finance Officer acts as the Ambition Board's Statutory Finance Officer and I reported to the meeting on the 28th June, "It is likely that the discretionary financial sources (pay capitalisation, part funding by grant) are available but if required, the permanent cost of the core structure put forward remains affordable within the Board's core resources".

However, the Board's members were also reminded that every partner establishment will contribute towards any financial risk on the basis of the current governance agreement (including any possible redundancy costs) which would become evident as a result of failing to secure the discretionary financing streams, and the fact that the agreement provides that the accountable body (Gwynedd Council) receives indemnity from the other partners.

An early appointment is required in order to make progress with a programme of projects in excess of the value of £240m to the North Wales region, which would include investment and valuable jobs in Gwynedd. I, therefore, support the decision sought.