



Recruitment Pack

Chief Executive Officer

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar





Message from the Leader

If you are looking for a reward and challenge in one of the most beautiful areas of Scotland, we hope that you will get in touch.

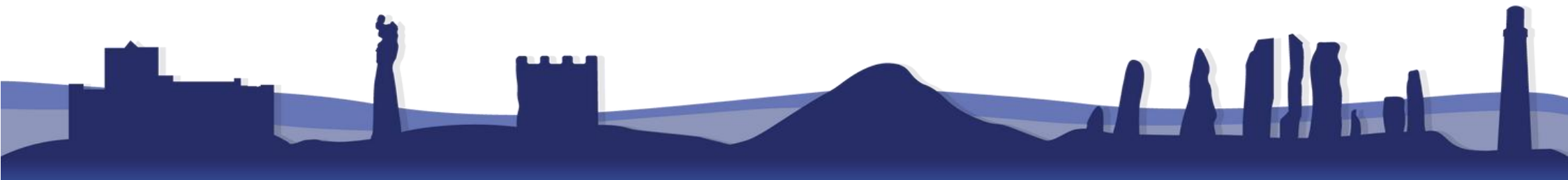
The Western Isles is one of the most beautiful settings in which to live and work in Scotland. The post of Chief Executive of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar presents an opportunity to combine a challenging but fulfilling remit with an excellent quality of life at a time when the future direction of local government and the delivery of public services offers a rare opportunity for career development.

We are looking for a Chief Executive with energy, drive and total commitment to lead our local authority. You will require good political knowledge and awareness and have a strong commitment to good governance and accountability.

These are of course challenging times for local government and the public sector generally. We believe that we are as well placed as any to meet these challenges and are committed to supporting well-developed ideas for innovation and development, looking to take advantage of strategic opportunities, maximising and increasing our resource base, while maintaining a focus on the highest possible quality of services.

Despite suffering a higher real terms reduction in funding than any Scottish Local Authority Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has led and continues to lead the way in taking forward innovation in public service delivery and collaborative working. As Chief Executive you would be at the centre of this exciting work. For instance, in recent years Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has led the way in digital connectivity through e-Sgoil which transformed the way education is delivered across Scotland and opened huge opportunities to school and adult learners.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar continues to be a national leader perhaps most notably in the areas of Public Sector Reform and Renewable Energy.





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean

In this year's Programme for Government the First Minister announced that Government will progress Preferred models for Single Authority Models in our and two other areas of Scotland, developed jointly by local government and health. This work will include a plan and timeline for implementation, with at least one area transitioning to shadow arrangements.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has been at the forefront of this work and will continue to engage directly with Scottish Government and local public sector colleagues to progress our aims of improved community empowerment, democratic accountability and financial sustainability.

The ongoing investment through the Islands Growth Deal continues to allow for the progression of projects across our islands. This ten-year package of investment is driving economic growth and the creation of sustainable jobs across Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles.

On the topic of investment and the creation of jobs the Western Isles is on the cusp of huge investment through major renewable energy developments. The Comhairle is committed to working with industry, public sector partners, and local communities to ensure that any renewable projects are delivered efficiently and responsibly, and the legacy benefits are delivered for the islands.



Cllr Paul Steele

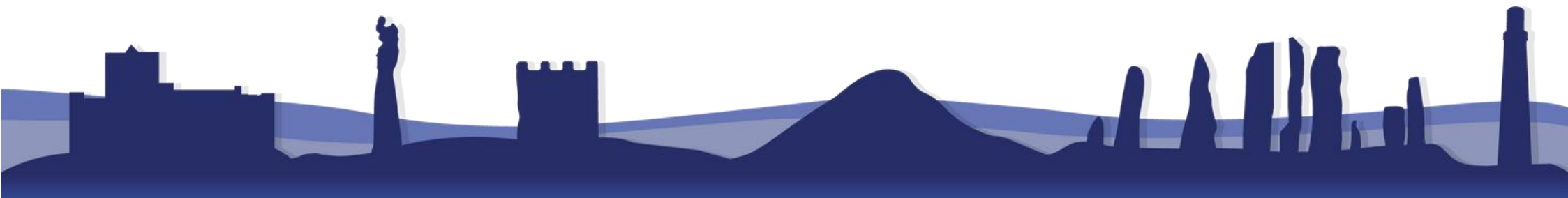
Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar serves a population of approximately 27,000 residents across the islands, from Lewis in the north to Barra and Vatersay in the south. The Comhairle is the area's largest employer with around 2,000 employees who deliver a diverse range of services to the public.
- Elected Members represent eleven electoral wards, set our strategy and policies. The Comhairle comprises 29 Members – 21 Independents, 6 SNP, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative. The Comhairle takes decisions through the committee system in which Members make decisions about the strategic direction of the Comhairle as well as the direction of individual Comhairle services.
- 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. In those 50 years the Comhairle has developed a strong reputation for the delivery of local services, the improvement of island infrastructure and the development of new technologies.
- The Comhairle prides itself on good financial management. Despite real terms budget cuts of 18% since 2013/14 the Comhairle has balanced budgets and sought to maintain the highest possible quality of our key public services.
- The Comhairle has a strong function of community leadership and provides effective external representation of our islands' needs, engaging with UK and Scottish Government at all levels on behalf of our communities.





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean

Chief Executive Salary Package £136,389*

*Chief Executive Salary Review Pending

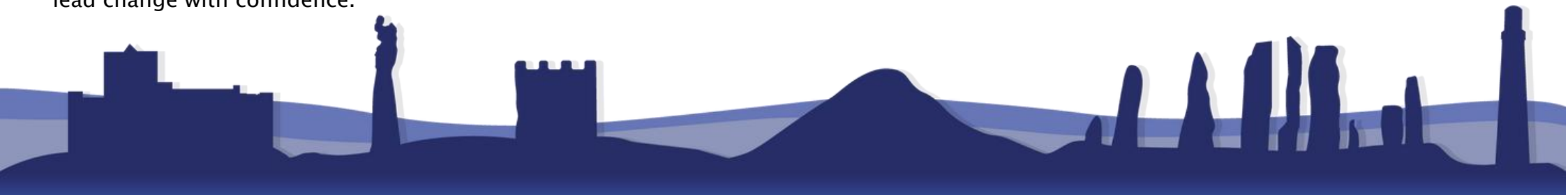
The successful candidate will be a Chief Executive who can take responsibility and show the leadership needed for our times: for the strategic leadership of services that directly impact the lives of communities across the diverse environments of the Western Isles. You will guide, inspire and support a committed workforce, united by a shared ambition to support and make a positive difference to the lives and prospects of our residents.

We are seeking an individual with significant and demonstrable experience at senior level, with a proven track record of effective leadership of strategic change and innovation. You will have successfully navigated the challenges facing public services in Scotland, delivering improvement through collaboration, clarity, and decisive leadership, based on your knowledge of Local Government and its unique and key role.

A cornerstone of your success will be your ability to build trust and foster confidence across the Comhairle and with external stakeholders. Your leadership style will be defined by personal credibility, integrity, and excellent communication—enabling you to engage effectively with Members, employees, partners, and communities.

As Chief Executive, your office base will be in Stornoway, where you will lead the Comhairle's Corporate Management Team, ensuring a unified approach to service delivery and organisational performance. Working closely with our team of Chief Officers, you will provide clarity of purpose, drive improvement, and champion innovation across all Council services.

You will be a highly collaborative leader, interested in people and in developing their capabilities, and committed to cultivating a culture of empowerment, accountability, and excellence. Your energy, insight and commitment will inspire others to perform at their best and to lead change with confidence.





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean

You will also bring strong financial acumen, with a clear understanding of the fiscal context in which Scottish local authorities operate and will be committed to the principles of good public sector governance. You will be confident in interpreting complex performance data and in deploying resources effectively to maximise value and impact. Above all, you will drive high-quality service delivery and ensure that our residents and communities experience public services at their very best.

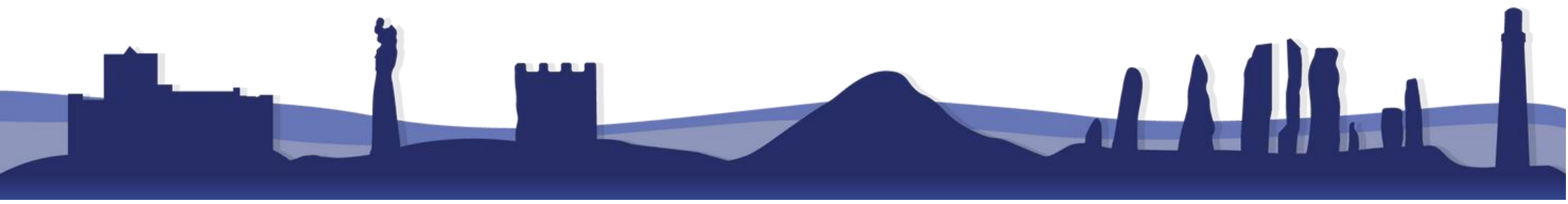
The Western Isles are a superb environment in which to live and work. We want to make our islands even better. If you're ready to join in leading us, shaping our future, inspiring our people, supporting our communities and serving with ambition and compassion, we look forward to hearing from you.

You should be educated to degree level or equivalent appropriate professional qualification and be able to provide evidence of continuing professional development. A relocation package of up to £8,000 is available if required. This post is politically restricted.

For an informal discussion about this opportunity, please contact, Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive at m.burr@cne-siar.gov.uk

Closing date: 24 November 2025

Interview date: Week commencing 8 December 2025





Our Corporate Strategy Priorities and Values



Strengthen the local economy



Support children, families and young people



Support caring and resilient communities and quality of life



Deliver community leadership



Be Ambitious



Be Efficient



**Be Open and
Transparent**



**Listen and Empower
Our Communities**



**Care for and Support
Those in Need**



Work in Partnership



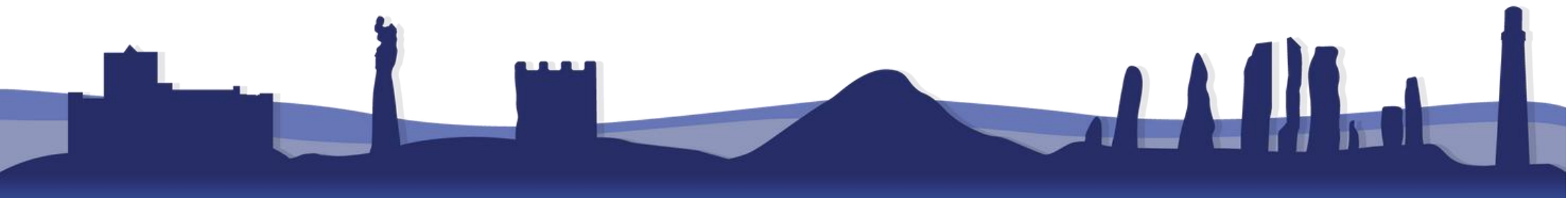
**Promote and Natural
Environment**



**Promote Community
and Wellbeing**

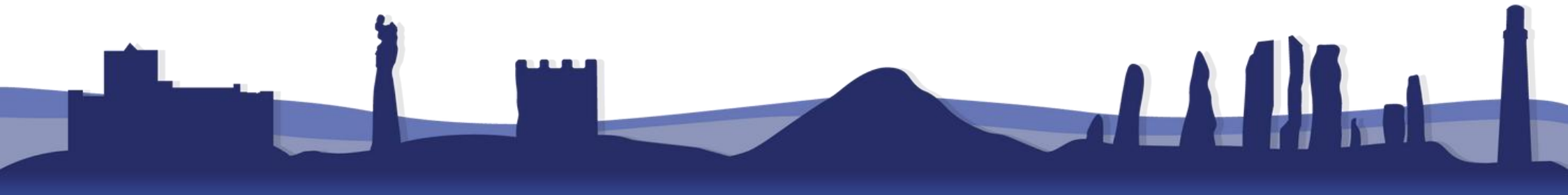


**Promote Fairness and
Equality for all**



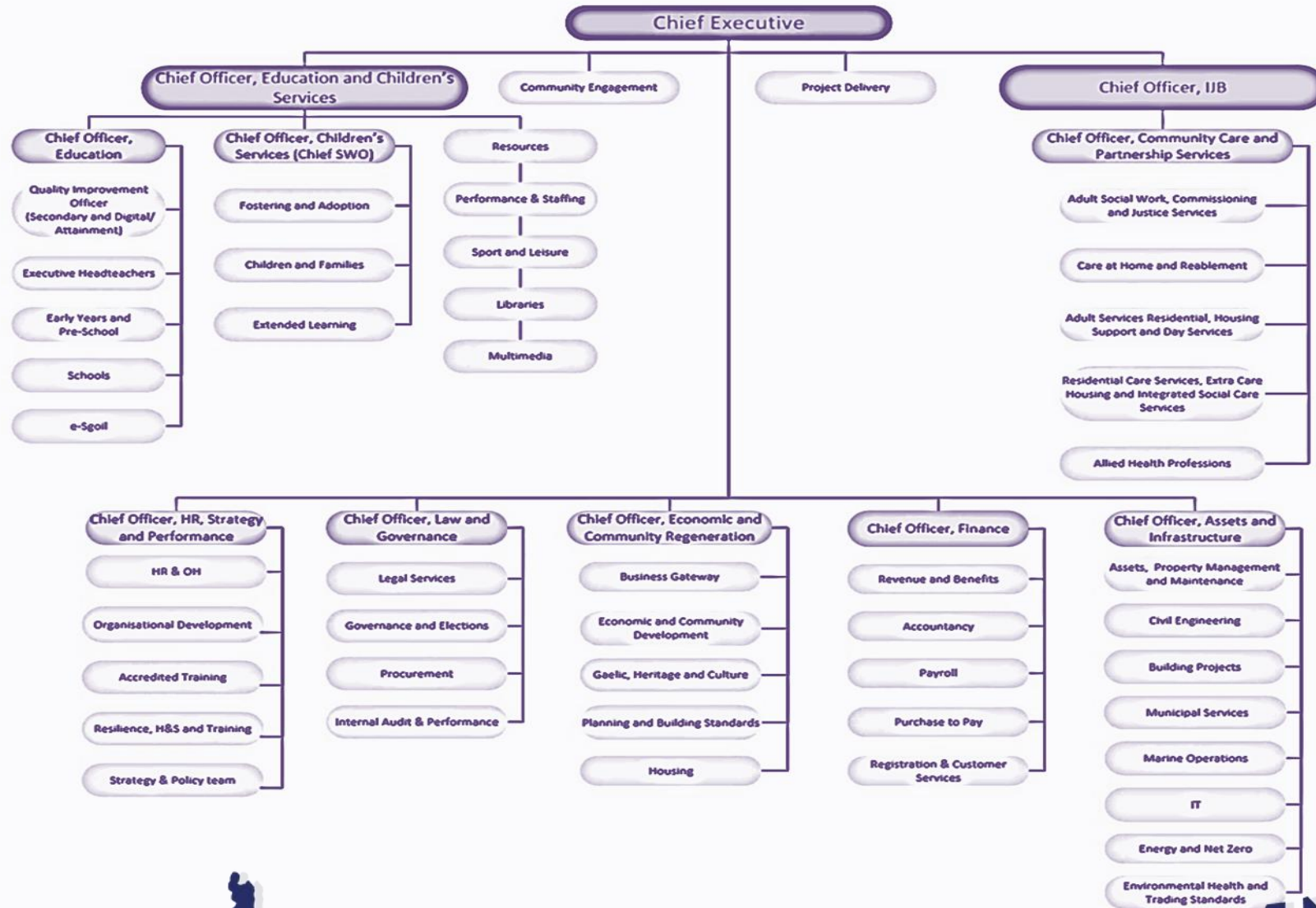


Committee Structure





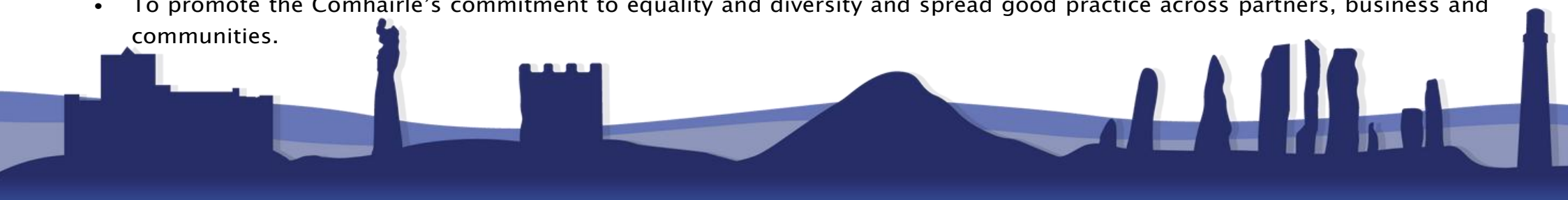
Organisational Structure





Job Purpose

- To undertake the statutory duties of Head of the Paid Service and provide effective leadership to all employees throughout the organisation, sustaining a positive organisational culture of collaborative corporate working, effective management and alignment of resources to promote best value and continuous improvement.
- To promote the wellbeing of the Western Isles including its services, communities, economy and culture.
- To lead, advise and implement the delivery of innovative strategies and policies which realise the opportunities and address the challenges facing the Comhairle and the Western Isles.
- To act as ambassador for the Comhairle to promote its good standing among local and national stakeholders and the communities of the Western Isles.
- To work closely in supporting Senior Members of the Council to realise their ambitious programme for the region through the development of innovative solutions to meet ever increasing challenges, and to advance the Comhairle's role in community leadership.
- To lead the delivery of the Comhairle's strategic aims and objectives as set out in the Corporate Strategy and other Strategies and policies, taking into account the needs of all communities in the Western Isles.
- To promote the continued professional development and wellbeing of employees of the Council.
- To ensure that services are delivered to the highest standards possible, through effective management of the Council and through effective and efficient commissioning of Services.
- To promote and sustain Community Planning and other partnerships.
- To promote the Comhairle's commitment to equality and diversity and spread good practice across partners, business and communities.



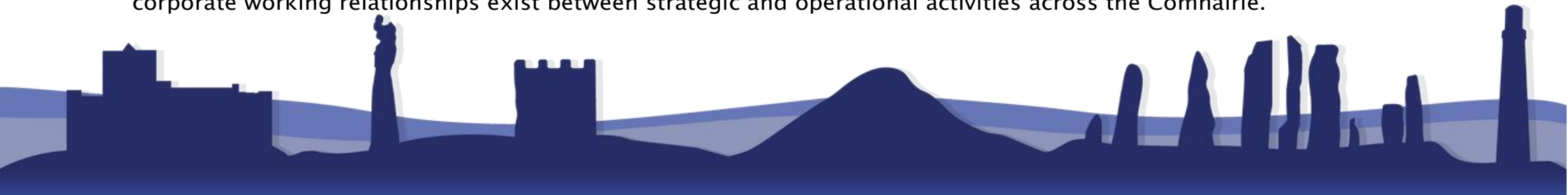


- To work with Members to ensure sound governance of the Council, maintain high standards and ensure the probity and integrity of decisions.
- To act as principal adviser to the Council, and provide clear advice to the Comhairle, its Committees, Working Groups and all other established forums, and to Members and groups of Members.
- To represent, and promote the interests of, the Comhairle at all levels of Government and with organisations, agencies, forums and groups with which the Comhairle is engaged.
- To undertake the role of Returning Officer and other electoral responsibilities.

Duties

Leadership

1. Act as an advocate for the Western Isles and develop the role of the Comhairle and its elected Members as community leaders.
2. Act as a role model to embed a culture of innovation and ambition for the Comhairle, leading on engagement and continuous improvement to meet the changing needs of the organisation and the wider community.
3. To develop and promote positive and productive working relationships that recognise and facilitate the respective roles of elected Members and officers and ensure an inclusive working environment for the efficient operation of the Comhairle.
4. Lead decisively and develop and direct senior managers, promoting a high performance and accountable culture in order to achieve the corporate priorities of the Comhairle.
5. Support senior managers to ensure a cohesive approach to delivery of the Comhairle's core activities and to ensure that good corporate working relationships exist between strategic and operational activities across the Comhairle.





6. Where necessary, act as the Chief Co-ordinating Officer in the event of a major civil emergency involving the deployment of the resources of the Comhairle.

Strategy and policy

7. Lead the development of creative and innovative evidence-based proposals that contribute to the overall vision to deliver a strategy upon which a balanced budget can be secured alongside the longer-term financial sustainability of the Western Isles.
8. Determine, evaluate and implement management structures that provide the necessary capacity, skills and performance to deliver the Comhairle's strategic priorities and statutory obligations within financial constraints.
9. To ensure that elected Members receive appropriate professional advice on major policy options, performance indicators and cost consequences and act as the principal policy advisor, leading the development of strategies that will deliver agreed priorities and objectives.
10. Promote community cohesion, and democratic values and accountability.

Partnerships and Public Relations

11. Work with elected Members in their role as community leaders by advising on building and fostering relationships across the local community to ensure that the needs of the Western Isles are articulated, and their interests progressed to achieve improved outcomes for local people within the fiscal constraints that exist.
12. Work with partners and stakeholders to harness local resources for the development of policies and community plans which benefit local people in line with the Comhairle's aspirations, and which make best use of available resources.
13. To support elected Members, in particular the Convener and Leader, on formal occasions.





14. To promote effective communications both within the Comhairle and with external bodies ensuring the maintenance of sound internal and external relationships with the community and the public and voluntary sectors.
15. To positively promote the image and reputation of the Comhairle by supporting members in building its influence through constructive relationships nationally and locally with private, public and voluntary sector organisations, ensuring that the islands secure the best possible outcomes.

Operational Management

16. Hold overall accountability for the management of employees. Develop a culture which demonstrates both a positive outlook and commitment to continuous improvement to meet challenges in a time of financial constraint.
17. Ensure the delivery of robust financial planning policies and procedures that allow the Comhairle to conduct its financial affairs effectively and that maximises the potential for income generation, whilst operating within its means.
18. In conjunction with senior management, be responsible for developing a culture of collective and individual accountability for the overall performance management, risk management, people management and change management operations to ensure the capability of effectively delivering the Comhairle's objectives.
19. Promote the development of effective policies in response to the changing demands imposed by legislation, government and service demands.
20. Provide modern and cost-effective democratic arrangements that meet legislative requirements.
21. Take overall responsibility for the Comhairle's risk and reputation management by ensuring it operates in an open, respectful, accountable and democratic manner.
22. Ensure the effective implementation and compliance with legislative requirements.
23. Represent the Comhairle on formal occasions, undertaking as necessary, reasonable civic duties.
24. Take personal responsibility for learning and development, ensuring the relevant training needs are identified through the Appraisal process.





Confidentiality

It is essential that the post holder complies with all Comhairle Policies and Procedures, extant Communication and Media Strategies. This involves taking the necessary precautions when transmitting information and only disclosing it to those who have the right and need to know it. All personal health information is to be held under the strictest legal and ethical obligations of confidentiality. All staff must respect confidentiality of all matters that they may learn relating to their employment, other members of staff, patients and their families.

Health and Safety

It is essential that the post holder assists in maintaining their own and others' health, safety and security. This involves complying with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Health and Safety policies, procedures and participating in mandatory training, maintaining a safe working environment and reporting any issues of concern as appropriate.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar attaches the greatest importance to the health and safety of their employees. It is policy to do all that is reasonable to prevent personal injury and hazard to health by protecting staff and others including the public from foreseeable hazards compatible with the provision of proper services to patients. Employees in addition must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Equality, Diversity and Rights

The post holder should ensure one's own actions support and uphold the equality, diversity and rights of others. This involves acting in ways consistent with the approved policies and procedures, treating those you come into contact with equitably and with respect and recognising the need for aids or adaptations.





Person Specification

Knowledge

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E1	A comprehensive understanding of Scottish Local Government and the national (Scotland and UK) policy context relating to the Comhairle.	D1	Evidence of understanding local community needs and the importance of successful community involvement and empowerment.
E2	An understanding of the political dynamics of a largely Independent-led rural local authority or similar organisation.	D2	Knowledge of budget management and the deployment of resources to achieve corporate objectives through efficient and effective service delivery.
E3	A clear grasp of the legal, financial, workforce and digital context for Local Government.		

Skills and Abilities

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E4	Ability to provide inspirational leadership and to foster a positive organisational culture by engaging, encouraging, and enabling others to deliver their best.	D3	Able to operate openly and effectively within the democratic processes with the political awareness to develop working relationships with Comhairle Members.
E5	Ability to influence, negotiate and address issues and make sound decisions in potentially challenging environments, managing conflict and resistance when required.	D4	Ability to read, write and speak Gàidhlig.
E6	Able to work under constant pressure and respond effectively to challenges whilst maintaining a sense of perspective and proportion.		
E7	Ability to operate objectively, sensitively and effectively within a political environment in a manner which commands respect, trust and confidence.		
E8	Strong analytical skills with the ability to quickly understand complex issues and to translate strategic priorities into tangible actions and plans.		





Skills and Abilities (continued)

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E9	A successful track record of delivering innovative and ambitious solutions that have secured significant financial savings and other necessary changes in a challenging environment.		
E10	Demonstrates ability as a dynamic and persuasive communicator in formulating and delivering complex plans and goals.		
E11	Ability to understand and influence national policy direction and development into local plans and actions that meet Comhairle priorities.		
E12	Ability to deliver agreed outcomes and raise standards of performance/service/ excellence.		

Education and Experience

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E13	Educated to degree level and/or equivalent appropriate professional qualification.	D5	Post graduate level professional qualification.
E14	Evidence of continuing professional development.	D6	A relevant management qualification.
E15	Evidence of senior management experience in a complex organisation with a range of responsibilities, budgets and resources.		
E16	A successful track record of delivering innovative and ambitious solutions in a challenging environment.		
E17	Proven track record of effective decision-making, sound advice and guidance and establishing high performing teams and a strong performance management culture which is customer focused, quality driven and objectively measured.		

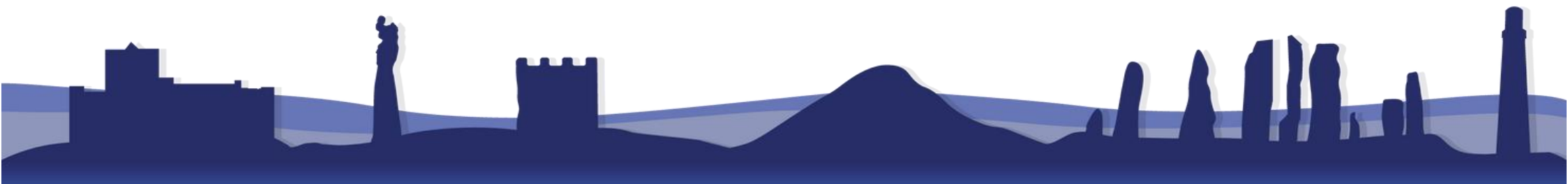


Education and Experience (continued)

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E18	Evidence of effective partnership working across professional, service and organisational boundaries.		

Other Factors

Essential Criteria		Desirable Criteria	
E19	Committed to local democracy, and accountability to the island communities of the Western Isles.		
E20	Commitment to having primary residence in the Western Isles.		
E21	Ability and willingness to travel as required to undertake the role.		
E22	This post will be subject to a PVG check.		





Western Isles

Consistently voted as one of the best places to live in the UK, the Western Isles offers a work life balance like no other.

Location Named by National Geographic in their best of the world list for 2025 the Western Isles has a global reputation for stunning scenery, rich culture and historical attractions.

Transport The Western Isles is connected to the mainland by ferries and planes offering travel to Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh within an hour.

Language The Western Isles has the highest percentage of Gaelic speakers in the world. Gaelic language education is available in all schools and Gaelic is used frequently within the local community.

Outdoor activities Those who enjoy outdoor activities will find that the islands have a lot to offer. Outdoor pursuits such as horse riding, hiking, and fishing are popular, as are water sports such as canoeing, surfing, and kayaking.

Sport and Leisure With excellent access to outdoor activities and well-established football and racquet sports as well as rugby, shinty and athletics clubs, the Western Isles has an array of opportunities to engage with recreational and competitive sports.

Community Over 75% of the population of the Western Isles lives on community owned land. Engagement with local community associations and land trusts offers opportunities to meet people and participate in local decision making.





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the local authority for Na h-Eileanan an Iar with 29 Elected Members from 11 wards.

An Island Council Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is responsible for the delivery of services to a population of 26,120 (2022) spread across 15 inhabited islands.

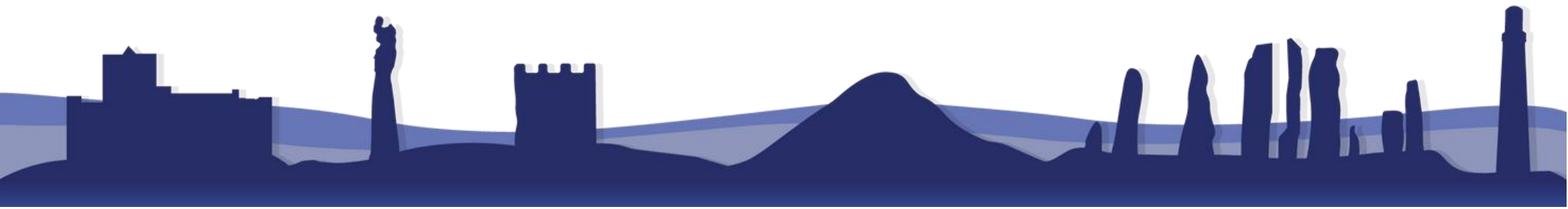
Biggest Employer Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the Western Isles biggest employer, with a workforce of 1565 FTE employees.

50 Years of Leadership 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. In those 50 years the Comhairle has developed a strong reputation for the delivery of local services, the improvement of island infrastructure and the development of new technologies.

Preserving Service Delivery The Comhairle prides itself on good financial management. Despite real terms budget cuts of 18% since 2013/14 the Comhairle has maintained the high-quality delivery of key public services.

Looking to the Future Proposed major developments alongside the progress of Islands Growth Deal funded projects presents opportunities for significant future growth, employment and investment.

A Voice for the Islands The Comhairle plays an important role in engaging with UK and Scottish Government on behalf of our communities.





Transport Information

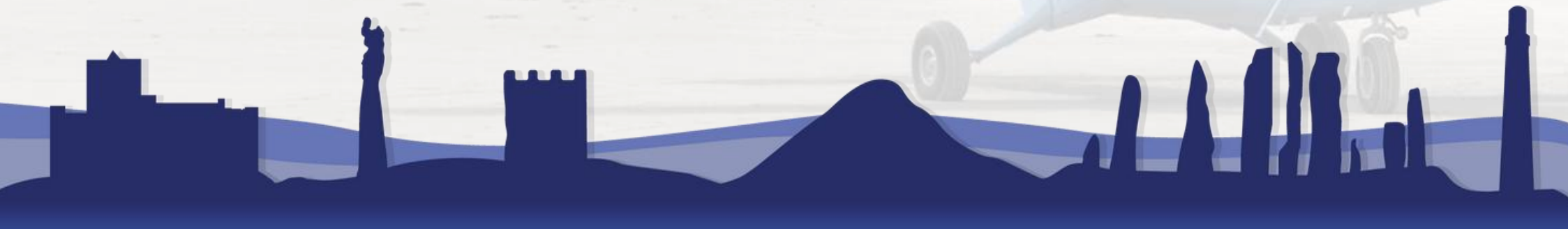
The islands are accessible from mainland Scotland by ferry or by plane. There are three airports on the Western Isles: Stornoway Airport, Benbecula Airport, and Barra Airport. The following destinations can be reached from these airports:

Stornoway Airport	Benbecula, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness
Benbecula Airport	Glasgow, Inverness, Stornoway
Barra Airport	Glasgow

All flights to and from the Western Isles are operated by Loganair.

If you live in the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland, you can apply for cheaper air travel through the Air Discount Scheme. Further information on the discounts available can be obtained via the Air Discount Scheme website.

There are nine ferry ports operating in the Western Isles. Routes run between the islands, as well as to and from the mainland. All routes are operated by Caledonian Macbrayne. Further information on the individual routes, including timetables and prices, can be obtained via the Caledonian Macbrayne website.





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean





Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ag Obair Còmhla Airson nan Eilean

