

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

8 February 2022

* Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)
Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Paul Spooner

*Present

Councillors Jan Harwood and Tom Hunt were also in attendance.

EM14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julia McShane, for whom Councillor Tom Hunt was substituting and from Councillor Paul Spooner, for whom Councillor Jan Harwood was substituting.

EM15 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee

RESOLVED: That Councillor Julia McShane be elected Vice-Chairman of the Employment Committee for the remainder of the 2021-22 municipal year.

EM16 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EM17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2021 were confirmed as a correct record. The chairman signed the minutes.

EM18 DESIGNATION OF MONITORING OFFICER

The Committee considered a report on the proposed designation of the Council's Monitoring Officer in the light of Diane Owens' departure from the Council with effect from 28 February 2022.

The Committee noted that the Monitoring Officer had a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the Council's Constitution and arrangements for effective governance and promoting high standards of conduct.

The report noted that under the Council's staffing structure, the post of Lead Legal Specialist was deemed to be the post most appropriate to be designated as the Monitoring Officer, as the role was the Council's most senior legal officer and solicitor. Whilst there was no specific requirement for the most senior solicitor or legal officer of any Council to be the Monitoring Officer, it was common practice for the monitoring officer to be a fully qualified solicitor given that part of the role was to ensure the Council's compliance with laws and regulations.

The role of Lead Legal Specialist required the post holder to be a qualified solicitor with significant post qualification experience and experience of working in a public sector environment. The Lead Legal Specialist was the 'head of profession' for legal services at the Council.

Following Diane Owens' resignation, an external recruitment process had been undertaken with the help and support of an employment agency. In July 2021, the Council decided to share a senior management team, including statutory officers with Waverley Borough Council. Following the appointment of the Joint Chief Executive, a restructure to create a Joint Senior Management had begun; however, the work was at too early a stage to provide an immediate solution for the recruitment of a new Monitoring Officer for Guildford. As such, it was not deemed an appropriate time to recruit a permanent Lead Specialist – Legal and Monitoring Officer. An external recruitment process for an interim officer for a period of 6 to 8 months had therefore been undertaken, which had culminated in an interview undertaken by members of the Employment Committee. Mr Stephen Rix had been appointed as the Interim Lead Specialist – Legal. The Committee noted that Mr Rix was a qualified solicitor with many years' experience in local government at different councils as well as previous experience as a monitoring officer.

The Committee thanked Diane Owens for her service with the Council and in particular her service as Monitoring Officer over the past year, and wished her well in her new career.

Having noted that in accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rule 4 (a), the formal designation of the Monitoring Officer was undertaken by full Council on the recommendation of this Committee, the Committee

RECOMMEND: That, in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Stephen Rix (Interim Lead Specialist – Legal) be designated as the Monitoring Officer for the Council with effect from 1 March 2022.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

The meeting finished at 11.10 am

Signed

Chairman

Date