

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

1 February 2021

- * Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- * Councillor Joss Bigmore
- * Councillor Paul Spooner

*Present

EM12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

EM13 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EM14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

EM15 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR 2020-21

The Committee

RESOLVED: That Councillor Joss Bigmore be elected vice-chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2020-21 municipal year.

EM16 DESIGNATION OF THE COUNCIL'S MONITORING OFFICER

The Committee considered a report on the proposed designation of the Council's Monitoring Officer in the light of Sarah White's departure from the Council with effect from 24 February 2021.

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 Sarah White had shared the post of Lead Legal Specialist with Diane Owens, who was currently the Senior Deputy Monitoring Officers, as part of a job-sharing arrangement. Officers were currently consulting with legal services staff on restructuring the legal services team. It was proposed that the structure would predominantly revert back to the structure proposed and consulted upon as part of Future Guildford Phase A.

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.

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, Diane Owens (Lead Specialist – Legal) be designated as the Monitoring Officer for the Council with effect from 25 February 2021.

Reason for Recommendation:

As a qualified solicitor with many years of local government experience carrying out both legal services and monitoring officer duties at a number of different councils, Diane Owens was currently the Senior Deputy Monitoring Officer and already held the post of Lead Legal Specialist. Diane Owens was therefore considered to be the most suitable officer to be designated as Monitoring Officer.

The meeting finished at 4.39 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date