

COUNCIL
1 JULY 2021
APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Bob Deed, Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer: Stephen Walford, Chief Executive

Reason for the Report and the Recommendation: the Council is required to have a Monitoring Officer at all times. This report makes recommendations for the interim appointment of an interim Monitoring Officer from 30 June 2021 and a permanent appointment to commence later in 2021

RECOMMENDATION: that the Council appoints:

- 1 Maria de Leiburne as an interim Monitoring Officer from 1 July 2021 until the new permanent Monitoring Officer commences employment later in the year; and**
- 2 Karen Trickey as the Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis from the commencement of her employment in 2021.**

Financial Implications: these decisions will not result in any budgetary increase for 2021/22

Budget and Policy Framework: There will be some additional legal costs arising from the need to put in place some casework support for the legal team. It is anticipated that it may be possible to absorb these over the remainder of the financial year through intra-budgetary changes.

Legal Implications: by section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council must designate one of their officers as the Monitoring Officer.

Risk Assessment: None directly arising – the recommendation for an interim Monitoring Officer meets the legal requirements and ensure that the overall compliance and standards obligations are monitored and maintained. A fully competitive recruitment process has ensured the selection of a suitably qualified candidate for the permanent role.

Equality Impact Assessment: the Council's recruitment processes and policies ensure that equality laws are satisfied.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: None directly arising.

Impact on Climate Change: None directly arising

1.0 Appointment of Monitoring Officer

- 1.1** With the departure of the Council's former Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer), Kathryn Tebbey, on 28 June 2021, the Council needs to appoint a new Monitoring Officer. Interviews took place in June for a permanent replacement to the newly styled "District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer" post.

- 1.2 Of the 4 candidates who applied, two were interviewed by a panel comprising the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Business Improvement and Operations and Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer). The Leader, Deputy Leader, Chair of Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Member for the Working Environment also spent some time (via Zoom) speaking to the two candidates after their interviews.
- 1.3 The Chief Executive agreed with the interview panel and the member panel that Karen Trickey should be recommended for this appointment. Karen has extensive experience as a local government solicitor (specialising in planning) and has acted as a monitoring officer for a number of authorities, most recently Teignbridge District Council.
- 1.4 A brief summary of Ms Trickey's experience is set out in the confidential appendix 1 (exempt information – personal information).

2.0 Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

- 2.1 The Council must have a Monitoring Officer in post at all times. Maria de Leiburne, is a solicitor and the Operations Manager for Legal Services and Monitoring. She has been deputy monitoring officer since 2016, alongside Sally Gabriel.
- 2.2 Maria is well-known and respected within the Council and has agreed to step up as Monitoring Officer on an interim basis. Due to the additional work load as Monitoring Officer, which can often be a full-time commitment, arrangements have been made to provide the necessary casework support during this interim period. Specifically, additional provision has been made to cover planning casework over the next 3-4 months.

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Circulation of the Report: Council

List of Background Papers: None