

**BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**  
**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at the Town Hall, Reigate on Thursday 26th April 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs R. Renton (Chairman); Councillors M.A. Brunt, J.M. Ellacott and Mrs R. Mill.

8. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

9. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. White.

10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

11. **APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive, following the Council's decision in November 2017 to extend the appointment of Mr Gavin Handford as Interim Monitoring Officer until the end of the 2017/18 Municipal Year (to allow the Committee to review the position again during and at the end of that period as necessary).

The Committee received a report on the work that Mr Handford had undertaken in his role as Interim Monitoring Officer since he was appointed into that position in April 2017 and an update on the extensive activities that he had undertaken, particularly in the period since the Committee last considered the matter in October 2017.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to the extremely difficult and testing activities that Mr Handford had managed during this period with an extensive range of complex matters that required his advice to ensure that the Council had been able to continue to deliver its priorities. The Committee noted that the forthcoming work programme for the Monitoring Officer included reporting to the Executive on a review of the Governance structure to reflect the requirements and changing needs of the Council's democratic fabric; a review of the Council's commercial governance activities as agreed by the Executive in March 2018 and supporting the Council to deliver the key objectives within its 5 Year Plan. The report before the Committee recommended the appointment of Mr Handford as the Council's Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis.

Councillor Mrs. R. Renton, Chairman of the Committee, reported that the Monitoring Officer had made an informal presentation to Members of the Committee recently that demonstrated the work that had been achieved in settling the new Legal Services team into the organisation. It was noted to have been a helpful opportunity to review the work that Mr Handford had undertaken in his Monitoring Officer role since undertaking this Interim position in April 2017.

Councillor Mrs Renton also advised the Committee that Councillor White, who had excused himself from the meeting, had indicated that he was minded to support the appointment of Mr Handford into the position of Monitoring Officer for a further interim period whilst the Council considered other longer term recruitment options available. Councillor White also observed the importance of the Monitoring Officer role maintaining a neutral and consistent approach.

Members recognised the range of contributions that Mr Handford had continued to provide to the Council in his role as Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. The volume of work that had been addressed in this period had been significant and the Chief Executive informed the Committee of the constraints on Mr Handford's capacity to undertake other development opportunities such as:

- a structured development review of the operation of the Monitoring Officer service from a member perspective;
- shadowing Monitoring Officers at other authorities; or
- undertaking additional specific training on the role (as discussed by the Chairman following the October 2017 meeting of the Committee).

Members considered that it would prove beneficial to the Council as a whole if a recruitment campaign was undertaken as soon as possible, to establish a wider range of options open to the Committee.

In the circumstances the Committee reviewed the Options presented in the report and considered that, to provide greater capacity within the organisation and to provide Members with more choice, that the Option to reappoint Mr Handford for a further interim period as Monitoring Officer be recommended whilst (in parallel) undertaking a recruitment campaign. The Committee noted that the recent experience of recruitment for positions in the legal services had been challenging as the competition with private sector packages available restricted the range and volume of interest.

Members also noted the importance of establishing their key aspirations for the member aspects of the role going forward. This included the potential development opportunities for the Council by reviewing the person specification, key behaviours and job summary for the position of Monitoring Officer linked appropriately with the desired outcomes from the member aspects of the role. Members noted that there would be financial implications to be considered for the proposed recruitment of an external appointment to the role of Monitoring Officer and that these would need to be the subject of further consideration when that information was available.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** that:

(i) in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Mr Gavin Handford, be confirmed as the Council's interim Monitoring Officer (confirming his acting role) until such time as a successor was appointed and in post;

(ii) in parallel with recommendation (i) above the Council undertake a recruitment campaign for the position of permanent Monitoring Officer;

(iii) in preparation for the recruitment campaign referenced at recommendation (ii) above a review of the person specification, key behaviours and job summary for the role of permanent Monitoring Officer be considered by the Committee (informally) in advance of the recruitment campaign beginning; and

(iv) the Head of the Paid Service keep the Members of the Committee appraised of progress and, if it appeared that the conclusion of the recruitment campaign referenced at (ii) and (iii) above, to appoint a permanent successor to the role of Monitoring Officer, was likely to take longer than the next 6 months, then a further meeting of the Committee be convened to discuss next steps.

**Reason for decision:** To comply with the requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

**Alternative Options:** To appoint another Officer of the Council.

12. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**The meeting closed at 7.02 p.m.**