

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	22 July 2021
TITLE:	Appointment of Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: None	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report seeks Council's approval of the appointment to the new position of Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Restructuring Implementation Committee is recommending that the Council approves:

- 2.1 The appointment of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer to Michael Hewitt on a salary of £80,108 per annum from 23 July 2021.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The recurring costs associated with the post of Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer will be met from within the existing Budget provision for pay and related employer on-costs.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The Council's senior management structure is designed to provide the strategic leadership and oversight to enable the Council the maximum opportunity to deliver on its corporate plan.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Our financial challenge, both short and medium term is significant. This, along with our new ways of working requires us to overhaul our organisational structure, operations and culture. The change needs to start at the top with a cohort of senior officers committed to delivering the change required.
- 5.2 We now have a clear corporate strategy and with a reconfigured and streamlined senior management structure, the council will be prepared for the future and well placed to deliver the outcomes required.

- 5.3 In early October 2020, Cabinet and Group Leaders agreed that a new post of Chief Operating Officer should be created and that the Director portfolios should be reviewed and reorganised to enable delivery of the corporate plan. The new structure took effect from 1 April 2021. Appointments to new and vacant Director posts were completed by the end of April.
- 5.4 The new post of Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer reports to the Director of People & Policy. The post was advertised externally during the end of May/early June. Three candidates (all male) were invited to attend a virtual selection process including interviews with key team members and the Restructuring Implementation Committee on 30 June 2021. Two candidates were invited to a final interview in person with the Restructuring Implementation Committee on 8 July 2021. One Liberal Democrat member was in attendance, along with the Chief Executive and the Director of People & Policy.
- 5.5 The Committee was impressed by the standard of the shortlisted candidates. After careful consideration of all assessment information as well as the final interviews, its decision is to recommend the offer of appointment of Mr Michael Hewitt, current Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, whom it considered demonstrated the necessary vision, leadership skills and experience to meet the future needs of the Council and challenges ahead. Mr Hewitt is a qualified solicitor with over 20 years' legal practice in local government, much of which is at a senior level.
- 5.6 It further recommends that the appointment be offered on a starting salary of £80,108 per annum (Grade 14) with other conditions of employment being in accordance with those determined by the National Joint Council.
- 5.7 Subject to Council agreeing the Committee's recommendations in this report, it is anticipated that Mr Hewitt will take up the appointment on 23 July 2021.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken. Section 4 of the The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires all local authorities to appoint a Monitoring Officer.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1 The Monitoring Officer will have delegated responsibility for ensuring the Council rises to the strategic leadership challenge of responding to the climate and ecological emergencies and enables Bath and North East Somerset to achieve its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. This will include ensuring that the Council leads by example in all its activities, making the radical changes needed, as well as taking a lead role in influencing and working with partners across all sectors locally, regionally and nationally and ensuring wide and deep citizen engagement.

8 EQUALITIES

- 8.1 An impact assessment has not been carried out. The recruitment and selection process was conducted fairly in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures and taking account of its Equalities Policy.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 Recognised trade unions have been consulted on the detail and implementation of the new senior management structure.

10 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

10.1 All issues have been addressed in the body of this report.

11 ADVICE SOUGHT

11.1 The Council's Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) has had the opportunity to input to this report and has cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	N/A
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