

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 at 10.00 am in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Harry Scobie (Chair); Councillors Albon, Austin, Davis, Donaldson, Everitt, Garner, Huxley, Nichols, Ovenden, Rusiecki, Whitehead and Wright

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members:

Councillor Worrow;
Councillor Dawson, substituted by Councilor Rusiecki;
Councillor Duckworth;
Councillor Crittenden who was meant to substitute Councillor Duckworth.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

Mr Colin Carmichael, Interim Chief Executive, advised the meeting of a significant interest regarding the item on the appointment of the Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (agenda item 4), as he was the incumbent.

As a result, Members agreed to swap around the agenda items so that the item regarding the appointment of the Council's Monitoring Officer would be considered ahead of the one for appointing the Interim Chief Executive.

29. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS REPORT

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Davis seconded and Members agreed to unexempt annex 1 to the report on the appointment of the Council's Monitoring officer.

30. APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S MONITORING OFFICER

Mr Colin Carmichael introduced the report and advised Members that it was a statutory obligation for the council to appoint to the position of the council's Monitoring Officer.

Members asked if there would be adequate legal support for Mr Nick Hughes, the deputy Monitoring Officer if he was asked to be the acting Monitoring Officer. Mr Carmichael advised the meeting that there was adequate legal support in the Legal Department, but if needed, external legal assistance would also be sought. Members thanked Ms Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer for covering that role on an interim basis.

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Huxley seconded and the General Purposes Committee agreed to forward the following recommendations to Full Council:

1. That Ingrid Brown be appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer from her first day of service;
2. That, in the meantime, Sameera Khan should continue in that role until either she leaves the Council's service, or until Ingrid Brown's first day of service, whichever is earlier;
3. That, if Sameera Khan leaves the Council's service before Ingrid Brown begins,

4. Nick Hughes, as deputy Monitoring Officer, should cover the role for the interim period.

At the conclusion of consideration of this item, Mr Carmichael left the meeting room.

31. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICES

Ms Sonia Godfrey, Head of Human Resources introduced the report and said that the role of the Head of Paid Service was a statutory one. The council was therefore required to have a Head of Paid Service in post. This was critical for the Council's stability. A twelve months' extension of the contract would ensure continuity and stability until a permanent appointment was made.

Members thanked Mr Carmichael for the work done thus far and that he was the right choice who had brought significant experience into the organisation. Mr Carmichael was insightful and well regarded by senior officers and Members. His work was well recognised by all the political groups. When asked when the Council would be employing on a more permanent basis to that role, Councillor Everitt, Leader of Council said that at the appropriate time, he would start by speaking to all the group leaders to kick start that process.

Councillor Albon proposed, Councillor Rusiecki seconded and the General Purposes Committee agreed to forward the following recommendations to Full Council:

1. For Full Council to extend the appointment of Colin Carmichael as Interim Chief Executive, Head of the Paid Service, and Returning Officer for a further year, until 31 July 2024;
2. To note that the Appointment Panel has the responsibility of determining the timing and process of the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

Meeting concluded : 10.15 am