

**Minutes of the meeting of Employment panel held at
Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE
on Tuesday 15 February 2022 at 3.30 pm**

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner (chairperson)
Councillor Ellie Chowns (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Tony Johnson and Liz Harvey

Officers: Director of HR and OD and Chief Executive

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Terry James.

59. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

None

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

61. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2022 were approved.

62. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

63. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

64. RECRUITMENT OF DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LAW

The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the item:

The panel heard that the council's director of governance and law would be leaving the council on 20th March 2022. The report the panel had received set out proposals to recruit to that post and for managing the designation of monitoring officer.

Following a recent evaluation of the functions of the role, it was proposed to recruit to the post on a like-for-like basis. It was explained that shortlisting and interviewing for the post was reserved (within the council's constitution) to the employment panel, which was why the proposal was being put to the panel at the meeting that day.

The director pointed out that recruiting good candidates to the role would be challenging. The current recruitment market was particularly difficult and relying on a national advert to attract

suitable candidates would not likely be successful. The report recommended that a specialist agency should be engaged to headhunt a field of candidates.

The panel heard that there was an indicative timetable for recruitment, which was potentially subject to change. The aim of the timetable was to balance the need to get on and fill the posts at pace, without moving so quickly that sufficient time wasn't available to conduct a thorough search for suitable candidates. The panel was assured that once an agency had been engaged the timetable and timescales could and would be confirmed.

The director explained that it would not be possible to recruit permanently to the post before the current post holder left and that the chief executive intended to search for interim agency cover for the director of governance and law.

It was stated that cover should be in place from mid-march, until the post is filled. The employment panel was asked to recommend to Full Council that the post of interim director of governance and law was designated monitoring officer from 21st March 2022.

Item Discussion:

The panel discussed the report and presentation and considered whether the existing structure was one that should be replicated or needed examining. The chief executive explained that alternative structures for the role had been considered, but that they would potentially create unnecessary additional layers of management

The panel noted the importance of combining the roles of head of governance and law with that of monitoring officer and it felt the coming together of responsibilities gave the holder of the role and the council greater strength. It was also accepted by the panel that having the role holder report to the chief executive rather than another layer of management was a benefit.

The panel enquired as to whether a specialist recruitment agency had already been identified. The director of human resources and organisational development stated that a contract had not been signed at that moment in time, but quotes had been received and the groundwork was in place.

It was resolved that:

- a) Recruitment for the Director of Governance and Law is initiated in line with the estimated timescales set out in paragraph 8 below;**
- b) Employment panel endorses the recruitment plan and delegates long listing to the Chief Executive and Director of Human Resources and Organisational development; and**
- c) Employment panel recommends to full council that the post of (Interim) Director of Governance and Law is designated as Monitoring Officer from 21 March 2022.**

The meeting ended at 3.39 pm

Chairperson