



Thursday, 18 September 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter
Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member
for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To appoint to the role of Director of Law & Governance and the statutory position of Monitoring Officer.

Recommendations

Full Council appoint Graham Kitchen to the role of Director of Law & Governance and the statutory position of Monitoring Officer, from agreed commencement date, as recommended by Employment Committee.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 This post forms part of the Council's staffing establishment. Sufficient budget is available to fund this appointment.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of finance and Deputy s151 officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council's Constitution provides a delegation that the Employment Committee appoints to posts at Assistant Director level and above; however, Full Council can choose to exercise this function themselves. For the additional statutory post of Monitoring Officer, Employment Committee are asked to oversee the recruitment and selection process before being asked to consider recommending the candidate to Full Council for approval.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Human Resources

- 1.3 The Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy clearly set out the procedures and requirements and the correct process has been followed, including Equality and Diversity Legislation.

Completed by: Sam Fitt, Senior Human Resources Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 On 16 September 2025, the Employment Committee carried out interviews to recommend a suitable candidate to the role of Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer. The Committee was assisted by Solace In Business Group, and the Council's HR team. The process prior to the interviews included an assessment stage conducted by Solace Group and the Chief Executive with additional involvement of the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 3 September 2025.

- 2.2. Six candidates applied for the role. The process prior to the interviews included a longlisting process by a panel comprised of the Solace Group consultants, the Council's Chief Executive, and the HR Team. Each candidate was scored against an objective criterion. The longlisting panel unanimously agreed that four candidates should proceed to an assessment stage held on 3 September 2025. Prior to the assessment stage, one candidate dropped out, which resulted in 3 candidates going forward to that stage.
- 2.3. The assessment stage was composed of technical interviews, psychometric testing and a written exercise relating to the Code of Conduct. As part of the assessment stage, candidates all met with the corporate management team, as well as the Leader of the Council.
- 2.4. Following the assessment stage, Solace Group made recommendations on each of the candidates' suitability for further consideration. These were presented to an informal meeting of the Employment Committee on 8 September who agreed a shortlist of candidates to be invited.
- 2.5. After this shortlisting panel, one successful candidate, Graham Kitchen, proceeded to a formal interview process at Employment Committee on 16 September 2025.
- 2.6. Graham Kitchen submitted a strong application, which was subsequently reflected in a strong technical interview, written exercise, stakeholder engagement and psychometrics.
- 2.7. Graham Kitchen then gave a strong final presentation and interview to the Employment Committee.
- 2.8. At Employment Committee on 16 September 2025, it was agreed to recommend Graham Kitchen to be appointed to the role of Director of Law & Governance and the statutory position of Monitoring Officer.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Employment Committee with the assistance of Solace In Business Group, and the Council's HR team, considered all applications, and have recommended a suitable candidate for the role.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Do not appoint Graham Kitchen and continue with the interim arrangements of having a shared resource with another council for the post of Monitoring Officer.
- 4.2 Do not appoint and risk having no-one fulfilling the statutory role of Monitoring Officer for the Council.

