

REPORT TO:	Council
REPORT NO:	HCCS /18/18
DATE:	28 March 2018
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Pritchard (Leader and Lead Member for Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health & Safety and Governance)
CONTACT OFFICER:	Sue Robins, HR & OD Service Manager
SUBJECT:	Temporary arrangements – Returning Officer & Electoral Registration Officer
WARD:	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek Council approval for the temporary appointment of a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service).

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Appointments Committee, within their delegated powers, appointed an interim Chief Executive, Clare Field on 13 November 2017, pending the recruitment to the permanent position. On 27 September, Council approved the temporary appointment to the statutory role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, and this position was allocated to the Head of Corporate & Customer Services, Trevor Coxon.
- 2.2 As the Head of Corporate & Customer Services is due to retire on 31 March 2018, it is necessary to appoint another officer to undertake this statutory position, pending the appointment to the permanent role of Chief Executive. It is recommended that this appointment is made to the interim Chief Executive, Clare Field until such time as a permanent appointment is made.

- 2.3 The permanent position of Chief Executive currently holds the statutory responsibilities of Head of Paid Service, required under section 4, of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer as set out in the Council's Constitution (Table 5 - page 3-38). There are also a number of additional Proper Officer functions undertaken as defined in Part 7 of the Constitution.
- 2.4 There are no scheduled elections due to take place for over 12 months although there is always a risk of a local by-election occurring or indeed a snap national election being called. In such circumstances, although the Interim Chief Executive has not personally undertaken the roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer it is felt there is sufficient experience and professional knowledge in both the discrete in house and broader electoral team to ensure appropriate support is available to the ICE in the event of an election occurring in this interim period. There are also statutory mechanisms available to appoint a deputy or deputies with extensive powers to act should this be necessary.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members

- 3.1 Note the ongoing process to appoint to the vacant post of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and**
- 3.2 Appoint the interim Chief Executive, Clare Field, to the statutory roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the period of 1 April 2018 until a new permanent Chief Executive takes up their appointment.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) To fulfil the Council's legal duty to appoint to the statutory and proper officer roles contained in the Council's Constitution.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 An interim Chief Executive, Clare Field, has been in position since 13 November, 2017, following the resignation of the previous post holder to take up a post with another authority.
- 4.2 The statutory roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer are currently held by the Head of Corporate and Customers Services, Trevor Coxon but in light of his retirement from the Authority on 31 March 2018, it is recommended that the Interim Chief Executive is appointed to the statutory roles of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer during the interim period until such time as the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive is made.

4.3 The recruitment exercise to select a candidate for the permanent position of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) is continuing.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 **Policy Framework** – The recruitment process will comply with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules as set out in the Council’s Constitution. Appointment of a high calibre candidate will further delivery of the whole Council Plan 2017-2022 but in particular the Corporate Well Being Theme and Objectives of O1 and O2 in the Council Plan.

5.2 **Budget** – There are no extra budgetary implications relating to the temporary arrangements for Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

5.3 **Legal** – Employment legislation, policy and practice will be complied with. The Authority must fulfil its legal duty to appoint a Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. All appointments will need to have appropriate delegations given to them.

5.4 **Staffing** – Interim arrangements are necessary due to the recruitment timescales for the permanent appointment.

5.5 Equality/Human Rights -

Members are advised to consider the full Equality Impact Assessment which is available at http://vmwinsqld/equalityisalive/Menu.aspx?report_number=CSS/EIA/00179/2017.

A summary of the Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 1.

5.6 **Risks** - The Council remains at risk if there is insufficient senior management capacity and expert knowledge to lead the organisation. It is important to recruit to both the interim and permanent roles as quickly as possible to maintain appropriate leadership direction and coverage of statutory roles.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Not applicable.

7. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

7.1 This has not been considered by Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.