

Meeting of:	Senior Management Appointment Committee
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, 24 April 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Recruitment and Selection Arrangements for the Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer
Purpose of Report:	To ask the Committee to identify and confirm (following interview) a suitable candidate for appointment for the post of Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer
Report Owner:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Responsible Officer:	Rob Thomas, Chief Executive
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Officers have been involved in the initial round of interviews and associated recruitment activity
Policy Framework:	The final decision of the Senior Management Appointments Committee will be referred to Full Council for information
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report sets out the final interview schedule for the above position. • Members are asked to identify and confirm (following interview) a suitable candidate for appointment. • Details of the shortlisted applicants at the Final Interview Stage including applications from shortlisted candidates, will be shared under Part II. 	

Recommendations

1. To conduct interviews in relation to the post of Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer and to make a final determination to appoint a suitable candidate.
2. To delegate residual appointment details, as appropriate, to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources, if a suitable applicant is confirmed by Elected Members of the Committee.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure an appointment to the post is conducted in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
2. To ensure that all Council functions are met within this area.

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the resignation of the current postholder, the Senior Management Appointment Committee met on 27 February 2024 and approved the arrangements to recruit to the position of Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer.
- 1.2 The Job Description and Person Specification for the post is included in the Recruitment Pack which is attached to this report as Appendix A.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 In accordance with the prior approval of the Committee the post was advertised externally during March 2024.
- 2.2 Following an assessment process which included psychometric testing, a technical interview and presentation, the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with colleagues also involved in that assessment, has identified candidates that will be invited to the final interview stage with Members.
- 2.3 At the final interview stage, it is suggested that Members of this Committee interview the shortlisted applicants and that Members then determine if any candidate is suitable for appointment to the post.
- 2.4 A list of the suggested questions and presentation topic will be circulated for consideration and determination by Members.
- 2.5 Interviews will be conducted under "Part II" provisions of Access to Information legislation and Assessment forms will be provided at the Final Interview for Members to complete as part of the assessment.
- 2.6 Members are asked to delegate residual appointment details, as appropriate, to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources if a suitable applicant is confirmed by Members.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** This recruitment and selection exercise will be for a permanent appointment following the resignation of the current postholder. The post will require partnership working and collaboration with a number of stakeholders and partners.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a direct result of this report and process.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The funding for the post is already included in the Council's budget given that the post is part of the establishment. As a consequence no additional funding is required.

Employment

- 5.2** No direct implications other than those specified in the report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** This recruitment process is compliant with Local Government, Employment and Equalities legislation. The recruitment process has been managed in accordance with the Council's equality proofed recruitment and selection policy and the provisions of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

6. Background Papers

None applicable save for the Job Description and Person Specification which formed part of the recruitment pack, attached at Appendix A.

Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Role Profile

Job Title	Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Post Reference	X-LGLG100
Grade	Head of Service
Directorate	Corporate Resources
Location	Civic Offices & Remote Working
Responsible to:	Director of Corporate Resources
Responsible for:	Legal Services Democratic Services

Role Overview:

At the Vale of Glamorgan Council, we are dedicated to creating a culture that embodies our fundamental principles of Openness, Togetherness, Pride, and Ambition. We are on a mission to evolve and enhance the way we serve our diverse community, ensuring an equitable and prosperous environment for all our residents.

We are currently searching for an accomplished and proactive leader for the role of Head of Legal and Democratic Services, who will also fulfil the essential function of the statutory Monitoring Officer. This role is pivotal in providing strategic oversight and upholding statutory compliance. The ideal candidate will be a seasoned legal expert committed to public service and driving transformation in line with our values.

Our Values:

	Behaviour	What it means to us:
Ambitious	Forward thinking, embracing new ways of working and investing in our future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, you will demonstrate a forward-thinking mindset by exploring innovative approaches. ○ Set high standards for the Legal and Democratic Services teams, fostering a culture of excellence in service delivery. ○ Seek opportunities for growth and development within the legal and democratic framework, ensuring alignment with our strategic goals.

Open	Open to different ideas and being accountable for the decisions we take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Foster clear communication internally and externally as the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. ○ Actively listen, value diverse perspectives, and create an environment where ideas flow freely.
Together	Working together as a team that engages with our customers and partners, respects diversity and is committed to quality services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage collaboration and teamwork within the Legal and Democratic Services teams. ○ Build strong relationships with colleagues, elected members, stakeholders, and partners. ○ Foster partnerships and alliances to enhance the effectiveness of legal and democratic processes.
Proud	Proud to serve our communities and to be part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uphold the highest standards of governance, ethics, and professionalism. ○ Take pride in delivering high-quality legal and democratic services that meet the needs of the community and uphold the reputation of the Local Authority. ○ Celebrate achievements and contributions, fostering a culture of pride and recognition within the Legal and Democratic Services Teams.

Job Description:

As the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, you will:

Statutory and Legal Obligations:

- Fulfil the statutory duties of the Monitoring Officer, including monitoring compliance with statutory requirements, advising on matters of governance, and promoting ethical conduct and transparency within the Council. **(pursuant to section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989)**
- Provide expert legal advice and guidance to the Council, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, and managing legal risks effectively.
- Establish and maintain solid governance foundations, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory obligations, and fostering good governance practices throughout the Council.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Build and maintain effective relationships with elected members, senior executives, external legal advisors, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders, promoting transparency, accountability, and trust.

- Act as a key point of contact for external agencies, representing the Local Authority's interests and advocating for positive change within the community.
- Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to drive positive change and enhance service delivery, including working closely with members, peers, and partner organisations.

Operational Excellence:

- Deliver high-quality legal advice and support across a broad spectrum of areas, including but not limited to contracts, procurement, employment law, and litigation, to elected members, senior management, and operational teams across the organisation.
- Act as a representative for the Local Authority in legal proceedings, negotiations, and forums, safeguarding its interests and reputation.
- Proactively identify legal and governance risks to the Local Authority and develop strategies to mitigate these risks effectively.
- Implement and maintain robust systems for monitoring compliance with legal obligations, conducting audits, and promptly addressing any non-compliance issues.

Leadership:

- Work with colleagues to establish and embed an organisation culture that supports and promotes the right behaviours and performance to ensure the delivery of outcomes that meet the Corporate Plan and strategic objectives of the Council.
- Contribute to the Council's strategic leadership as a key member of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Lead, direct, and inspire people within the Service Area and across the Council to deliver great results. Ensure processes are in place for identifying and developing talent at all levels.
- Through own behaviours, be a role model for the leadership behavioural competencies; promoting and supporting the embedding of the Council's values and behavioural competencies throughout all levels of the organisation to build the organisation's culture.
- Demonstrate innovative thinking, challenge the status quo, and embrace new ideas and approaches to problem-solving, fostering a culture of creativity and innovation within the team.

General Duties:

- Work with the Directorate Management Team to provide strong leadership for Corporate Resources, making connections between the work of Legal and Democratic Services and the other teams within the Directorate to maximise the impact of our work.
- Explore opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services through collaboration and partnership working.
- Facilitate and participate in the introduction of policies, procedures, and practice to support the achievement of the objectives of the Council.
- Ensure that the principles of equality of opportunity are integrated and actively pursued both within the Directorate and in all areas of service provision.

- Ensure continuing compliance with Council policy, procedure and legislation including those related to the management of employees, health and safety, customer relations, safeguarding, information, equalities, the environment, and those specifically set out in Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.

In addition to the duties set out above, the postholder will be required to undertake such additional duties which may result from changing circumstances, but which may not of necessity change the general character or level of responsibility accorded to the post.

Person Specification

		Essential	Desirable	Ascertained by
1.	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial experience in a senior legal role, preferably within a local government context. Proven experience as a Monitoring Officer or in a similar statutory role ensuring compliance and promoting ethical conduct. Experience working in a political environment or with elected officials. Experience in driving forward a people focused, values-driven culture across an organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of building high performing teams and providing inspirational leadership to the wider organisation that drives a high-performance culture. 	Application Form Interview
2.	Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed knowledge of relevant legislation and legal practice. Understanding of the statutory duties of the Monitoring Officer. Understanding of the local government framework and its governance. 		Application Form Interview

		Essential	Desirable	Ascertained by
3.	Skills and aptitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to be a role model for the leadership behavioural competencies and promote the Council's values and behavioural competencies. • A strategic thinker, with the ability to develop and implement strategies that support the achievement of organisational objectives. • Excellent leadership skills, able to provide clarity to your team on the vision and purpose of their work. • Strong track record of building and nurturing productive working relationships, able to advocate for excellence, equity, and inclusivity. • Highly effective communication skills, able to influence others with impact and professional credibility, with the ability to communicate to a diverse community. • Dedicated to professional development and keeping abreast of relevant regulation and education trends. • Ability to manage resources effectively, including budgets, staffing, and facilities. 		<p>Application Form</p> <p>Interview</p>
4.	Qualifications and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Solicitor 		Application Form

		Essential	Desirable	Ascertained by
5.	Attitude and motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly motivated senior leader, able to act as a role model to team members and peers. • Adaptable and flexible to meet a variety of challenges. • An inspiring leader, able to engage team members to deliver exceptional performance in a challenging environment. • Innovative, change champion, who is happy to challenge the status quo to deliver on strategic objectives and solve problems. • A passionate role model of the values of the Council. 		Interview
6.	Other (please specify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and professional credibility • Drive, energy, and enthusiasm to sustain an extensive agenda. • Capacity to work outside of normal office hours and attend evening meetings as and when required. • Ability to drive/travel throughout the Vale or between locations as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to speak or learn Welsh 	Application Form Interview