

## Post of Head of Democratic Services Sub-Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Post of Head of Democratic Services Sub-Committee** held in the **Garden Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Wednesday, 14 October 2009** at 4.00pm

### **Present:**

Councillor A C De Vecchi (Chair – on election)

Councillors P F Gardiner and H J F Sheppard.

### **Minutes**

### **Action**

#### **122 Election of Chair**

##### Resolved:

- 122.1** That Councillor A C De Vecchi be elected Chair of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the current municipal year.

#### **123 Urgent Item**

The Chair advised that she had agreed, in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, that Report No 204/09 entitled “Legal and Democratic Services” (Agenda Item No 5 refers), be considered as a matter of urgency in order that the Sub-Committee could take its decisions based on the most up to date information which was available.

#### **124 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

##### Resolved:

- 124.1** That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of Report No 204/09 entitled “Legal and Democratic Services“, as there is likely to be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## 125 Legal and Democratic Services

The Sub-Committee considered Report No 204/09 relating to proposed arrangements for the management of Legal and Democratic Services following the retirement of the Head of Democratic Services. Details relating to the structure of the two departments was set out at Appendix B to the Report.

The Democratic Services and Legal Services Departments had been well managed and effective however, when jobs became vacant, the Council took the opportunity to review the situation in order to see if changes in circumstances required it to undertake its service provision in a different way.

During the past few years there had been considerable changes in the amount of high level administrative work which included a legal content including the Council's Constitution, the Scrutiny Process, obligations under the Code of Conduct for Councillors and ongoing guidance from the Standards Board. The Head of Democratic Services had therefore been the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer until 18 months ago when that responsibility had transferred to the Assistant District Solicitor.

There had been increased joint working between the Democratic Services and Legal Services Departments in recent years, especially in the area of standards work where the Monitoring Officer directly instructed the Committee Officer who provided extensive administrative support. Furthermore, recent changes in the law which had extended the role of the Scrutiny Committee provided further opportunities for joint working.

The proposed merger of the two Departments would not produce any increase in costs and should show some efficiency savings in the future in the handling of administrative work with a high legal content.

### Resolved:

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| <p><b>125.1</b> That the Chief Executive consult with the staff and Unison on the proposal set out in 125.2 to 125.4 below and advise the Sub-Committee of the outcome;</p>  | <p>CE</p> |
| <p><b>125.2</b> That the Legal Services and Democratic Services Departments be merged to form one Department under the management of the District Solicitor, the post title of whom could change in the future, as detailed in Report No 204/09;</p> | <p>CE</p> |
| <p><b>125.3</b> That an officer be appointed with the title of 'Democratic Services Manager' in accordance with the Job Description set out at Appendix A to the Report, such officer to report to the District Solicitor;</p>                       | <p>CE</p> |
| <p><b>125.4</b> That the Democratic Services Manager be not on the Corporate Management Team and that the post be job evaluated in</p>   | <p>CE</p> |

accordance with the Council's normal in house procedures;

**125.5** That advice be taken from Tribal Recruitment Services on the placement of the District Solicitor's post within the salary bands that are operated by the Council as the relativities of the Heads of Service salaries had not been considered for many years;

CE

**125.6** That advice be taken from Tribal Recruitment Services on the salaries for Heads of Service in the current market; and

CE

**125.7** That the details relating to the post holder referred to in Recommendation 6 of the Report, be noted.

Reason for the Decisions:

To consider a change in the Council's management structure.

The meeting ended at 4.30pm

A C De Vecchi  
Chair