

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



23 May 2025

Our Ref Employment Committee 4 June 2025
Contact. Committee Services
Direct Dial. (01462) 474655
Email. committee.services@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Keith Hoskins MBE (Chair), Ian Albert, Daniel Allen, Bryony May and Ralph Muncer

Substitutes: Councillors Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Steve Jarvis, Nigel Mason and Claire Strong

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF**

On

WEDNESDAY, 4TH JUNE, 2025 AT 10.00 AM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Director – Governance

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL
AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION
ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda

Part I

Item		Page
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
3.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
4.	DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT - PART 1 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE This report sets out the background to the process for recruitment to the Director Place and Director Governance (& Monitoring Officer) posts.	(Pages 5 - 18)
5.	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC To consider passing the following resolution: That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following report will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).	

6. DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT - PART 2
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Pages
19 – 56)

This report sets out further information on the recruitment to the Director Place and Director Governance posts and the recommendations of the Head of Paid Service on the appointments to the roles.

This page is intentionally left blank

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

4 JUNE 2025

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: DIRECTOR RECRUITMENT

REPORT OF: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITY: ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the background to the process for recruitment to the Director Place and Director Governance (& Monitoring Officer) posts.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Employment Committee interview the candidates for the roles.
- 2.2. That the Employment Committee note the content of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The details of the candidates and their performance throughout the recruitment process are contained in the part 2 report. This report sets out the background.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. Prior to the recruitment to the roles consideration was given to alternative options during the development of the Leadership Team restructure proposals that were approved by Full Council on 27 February 2025.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council were consulted on the approach to take with advertising the roles.
- 5.2. In order to comply with legal and constitutional requirements, Executive Members will need to be notified of any proposed appointment following a decision of the Committee for the Director Place, prior to an appointment being confirmed. The Director Governance includes a Statutory Officer (Monitoring Officer) responsibility and any offer of employment made would be subject to membership confirmation at Full Council of the appointment as Monitoring Officer.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Leadership Team restructure undertaken at the start of 2025 reviewed all the Director roles and re-focussed these two roles by moving some previous responsibilities to other areas. The new structure was approved by Full Council on 27 February 2025 and the committee report acknowledged the upcoming retirement of two Directors. The current Director Place retires on 1 June 2025 and interim arrangements are already in place to cover the transitional period until a new Director is in place. The current Director Governance retires on 31 August 2025 and interim arrangements may be required to cover any transitional period before the new Director is able to start. If this is required the Chief Executive will work with the current Director Governance to put suitable arrangements in place.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. Prior to advertising the role the job profiles were reviewed as part of the Leadership Team restructure. This ensured that they were robust and appropriate and did not unduly disqualify any potential candidate from applying. It was decided to run the two recruitment processes in parallel, in case there was a lack of candidates for either (or both) roles, as that would allow candidates' performance to be compared across the roles as well as against their own cohort.
- 8.2. The role was advertised both internally and externally, as is the standard approach for these positions. At the request of the Leader and Deputy Leader paid adverts were used in addition to the normal free listings (the Council's website and LinkedIn etc), to ensure that we tested the market to obtain the best possible candidates. Both roles were advertised with the MJ Local Gov Jobs, New Start and Jobs Go Public. Additionally, the Governance role was advertised with Local Government Lawyer and Public Law Jobs and the Place role was advertised with The Planner. Both jobs were promoted on several occasions across the Council's social media channels.
- 8.3. The adverts were posted on 4 April 2025, with a deadline of 29 April 2024 for submission of applications. At the initial stage candidates were shortlisted based on the written application form. Those shortlisted were required to then undertake a literacy test, a numeracy test and a personality profile. The personality profile was not scored but was used as part of the interview and to understand potential development needs. The candidates were then required to undertake a written test which candidates were given one hour to complete.
- 8.4. Finally, the candidates attended an interview with a panel of three officers (the Chief Executive, Director of Resources and HR Services Manager), during which they provided a presentation and answered competency-based questions from the panel. This is the same presentation question that will be provided to the Employment Committee (although candidates have been allowed to tweak it if they wanted to). Details will be provided in the part 2 report.

- 8.5. The application and tests were all carried out online. The panel interview was held in person. The process set out at 8.3 and 8.4 is the same process that has been used for Director recruitment in the last five years.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Council's Constitution sets out the terms of reference for the Employment Committee which states at 10.3.4(b) "To interview and appoint candidates for the posts of Director, and to interview and recommend to Council the appointment of Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Returning Officer/ Electoral Registration Officer." As per 10.3.5 by recommendation to Council for "The appointment of theMonitoring Officer prior to any offer being issued".
- 9.2. The Council's Constitution sets out the terms of reference for Full Council which states at 4.4.1(j) "the offer of appointment ... to the ... Monitoring Officer...".
- 9.3. Prior to confirming a formal offer to the successful candidate(s) it is a legal requirement to notify Cabinet of the proposed appointment (as reflected in the Council's Constitution at paragraph 12.8.5(b)) and the part 2 recommendations reflect that, noting that where this is a Statutory Officer post, 12.8.5(a) applies and this is subject to Full Council approval [(a) Where the appointor...is proposing to appointthe Monitoring Officer, the Council must approve that appointment before the offer of appointment is made....."]

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Full Council has previously approved the budget which includes the staffing budget at its meeting on 27 February 2025. Prior to the creation of the Service Director roles in 2018 the posts were subject to an external job evaluation exercise by Hay to determine the salary level for each post.
- 10.2. The total cost of the paid for job adverts was approximately £6.5k. Given the current uncertainty following the Devolution White Paper it was considered important to try to advertise widely in order to attract the greatest amount of attention. These costs were charged to the salary budgets for the role. Additionally there was a cost of £180 per candidate for the literacy and numeracy tests and £135 per candidate for the personality profiles.
- 10.3. The intention is that the cost of any interim arrangements required (see paragraph 7.1) will be met from existing salary budgets. Any variances will be reported to Cabinet through the usual budget monitoring processes.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2. The proposals contained within this report for future senior management arrangements of the Authority have regard to the adopted risk and opportunities framework in seeking to ensure that the Council manages its risks in an efficient and effective manner. By

approving the Leadership Team restructure Full Council acknowledged the risks posed by an under resourced Leadership Team.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. The Council's Recruitment Policies are developed and consulted upon in a way which complies with the Equalities Act 2010.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The Human Resources Implications are contained within the body of the report. The HR Services Manager played a full role in the recruitment, by providing support to the Chief Executive and as part of the recruiting panel.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – Job Profile Director Place
- 16.2 Appendix B – Job Profile Director Governance

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 17.1 Anthony Roche, Chief Executive
anthony.roche@north-herts.gov.uk; ext 4588
- 17.2 Ian Couper, Director Resources
ian.couper@north-herts.gov.uk;
- 17.3 Rebecca Webb, HR Services Manager
rebecca.webb@north-herts.gov.uk;
- 17.4 Jeanette Thompson, Director Governance
jeanette.thompson@north-herts.gov.uk;

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Report to Full Council – Leadership Team and Senior Management Restructure, 27 February 2025

JOB PROFILE

Job Title:	Director – Place
Service Area:	Place
Grade:	14
Reporting Manager:	Chief Executive
Direct reports:	Service Managers for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development Management- Strategic Planning- Planning Projects and Transport (inc. car parking)

Job summary:

Responsible for the overall management and operation of the Planning, Development Management, Transport and Car Parking Service. To provide a cost-effective service appropriate to the needs of the community, ensuring the Council adheres to relevant legislation, providing a responsive and efficient service and supporting the vision of the Council.

To act as client lead / shareholder representative for the Building Control shared service.

Key responsibilities:

To oversee the management of the sections making up the service to ensure an efficient, effective and customer focused service.

To ensure that all required policies, strategies and plans are developed to meet best practice and deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

To manage and co-ordinate the expertise of the service and formulate policies, strategies and proposals and to influence, promote and control development as required by legislation and political priorities.

To oversee the arrangements for the improvement and enforcement of standards in all areas for which the service is responsible.

To ensure that all regulatory and compliance work is carried out in accordance with statutory and other relevant guidance.

To oversee the development of SMART performance targets and supporting information for the team in line with statutory requirements and locally agreed performance measurement and to ensure that there is continuous improvement to meet and exceed targets.

To ensure that Members are fully briefed on issues relating to the Service and take responsibility for briefing the Portfolio Holder on issues so that key decisions can be taken effectively.

To ensure that arrangements are in place to take the administrative and definitive decisions on behalf of the Council and as “proper officer” for the purposes of the Access to Information Act.

To be aware of legislative changes that impact on the service areas and ensure that policy and procedures are revised to comply with statutory and national requirements and standards.

To actively participate in the corporate management of the Council, working across services to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

To provide supportive management to coach, develop and motivate staff and empower them to deliver high quality services and contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

To act as client lead / shareholder representative for the Building Control shared service.

In the absence of the Chief Executive and as directed exercise the functions, powers or duties of the Chief Executive.

Political restrictions

This post is subject to political restriction, which is divided into two categories and relates to the post holder duties:

- Specified posts, statutory posts as well as ‘deputy chief officers’
- Sensitive posts, which meet one or both of the following related criteria,
 - Giving advice on a regular basis to the Council itself, to any committee or sub-committee of the Council or any joint committee on which the Council are represented, or where the Council are operating executive arrangements, to the executive of the Council; to any committee of that executive, or to any member of that executive who is a member of the Council;
 - Speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

The postholder must therefore be aware that in accepting this post, they are required to confirm that they will conform to these political restrictions and that they will be included as conditions of their formal contract of employment with the Council.

Please follow this link to read your general responsibilities:

[General responsibilities for employees | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/general-responsibilities-for-employees)

Key Requirements:		Essential desirable
Qualifications:	A degree or equivalent in a relevant subject	E
	Full Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute or RICS or equivalent professional body	E
	Evidence of Continued Professional Development	D
	Management qualification	D

Job related experience & knowledge:	<p>Knowledge of the national policy agenda facing local government and that specifically related to Planning and Regulatory Services</p> <p>Proven track record of managing planning or building control at a senior level in a complex environment.</p> <p>Political skills and sensitivity.</p> <p>Understanding of budgetary control, financial management and experience of operating these.</p> <p>The ability to work strategically to achieve political aspirations within legislative requirements.</p> <p>Project Management experience.</p> <p>Able to contribute to corporate management and issues outside of the service.</p> <p>Knowledge of Health and Safety and Risk Management processes.</p> <p>Experience of appearance at public enquiries and/or Court cases.</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p> <p>D</p>
Skills & attributes required for the role:	<p>Confident in conversing in fluent English which is sufficient to fulfil all aspects of the role.</p> <p>Leadership skills that motivate and inspire staff.</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills to gain the confidence and commitment of stakeholders and potential partners.</p> <p>Excellent written and oral communication skills with experience of writing clear, concise and accurate reports for senior managers and Members.</p> <p>Experience of presenting and advising at Committee meetings.</p> <p>Ability to recruit, develop, train, appraise and manage staff at a senior level.</p> <p>Ability to develop effective liaison arrangements within the Directorate, across the Council and with external agencies.</p> <p>IT literate with experience of utilising IT solutions to improve efficiency of service delivery.</p> <p>Analytical skills to convert strategic management issues into practical implementation.</p> <p>Ability to produce practical and creative solutions to meet business objectives.</p> <p>A record of achievement and innovation in a field related to this job role</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>

Other:	Ability to promote the organisation's Values and Behaviours through your leadership.	E
	Ability to work effectively as part of a senior level management team.	E
	Ability to promote the image of the Directorate through articulate and confident approach.	E
	This post is subject to a satisfactory Basic check with the Disclosure and Barring Service and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders' Act.	E
	Ability to work unsociable hours.	E
	Commitment, drive and enthusiasm.	E
	Full driving licence and vehicle available for work use.	D

*E = Essential D = Desirable

Signed.....Employee

Date.....

JOB PROFILE

Job Title:	Director – Governance
Service Area:	Governance
Grade:	14
Reporting Manager:	Chief Executive
Direct reports:	Service Managers for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Legal Services- Democratic Services- Policy & Safeguarding

Job summary:

To be the Council's Chief Legal adviser, undertaking a full, varied, complex and challenging case load, advising on administrative and public law, policies and procedures across the Council. As the Council's Monitoring Officer to ensure probity, good governance and observance of ethical standards, maintenance of the Council's Constitution, advice to District and Parish Councillors on the Code of Conduct and related issues, investigation of breaches of the Code of Conduct and provision of legal advice to Councillors and officers.

To act as the Council's Deputy Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer. Responsible for the overall management and operation of the service areas specified above and undertake Proper Officer functions or others as constitutionally delegated.

To provide a cost-effective service appropriate to the needs of the community, ensuring the Council adheres to relevant legislation, providing a responsive and efficient service and supporting the vision of the Council.

Key responsibilities:

To have operational management of the Directorate to ensure an efficient, effective and customer focused casework and advice service and delivery of best practice in corporate governance across the Council.

Interpreting administrative and public law as it applies across the Council to ensure that all required policies, strategies and plans are developed to meet best practice and deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

To personally undertake the role of the Council's Monitoring Officer namely:-

- Maintaining the Council's Constitution.
- Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making in consultation with the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Finance Officer.
- Supporting the Standards Committee.
- Advising District and Parish Councillors on the Code of Conduct and all related issues.
- Conducting investigations into matters referred by Standards Committee.

- f) Reporting on cases of maladministration or injustice found by the Local Ombudsman.
- g) Advising whether Cabinet decisions are within the budget and policy framework.
- h) Providing advice to all Councillors on the scope of powers and the authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues.
- i) Involvement with cases of Maladministration and undertaking related Monitoring functions.

To attend and contribute to such corporate groups as required to ensure the effective governance of the Council.

To be responsible for authorising/ authorising officers to institute and settle legal proceedings on behalf of the Council and undertaking a full, varied, challenging and complex caseload of legal work including advising, drafting, advocacy and instruction of Counsel as required in relation to all and any legal advice the Council requires from time to time.

To authorise officers of the Council to appear as advocates in the Courts.

To attend and advise meetings of the Council and Committees.

To act as the Council's Senior Responsible Officer for the purposes of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

To undertake special assignments as necessary to deliver on Council / Service objectives.

To oversee the development of SMART performance targets and supporting information for the team in line with statutory requirements and locally agreed performance measurement and to ensure that there is continuous improvement to meet and exceed targets.

To provide supportive management to coach, develop and motivate staff and empower them to deliver high quality services and contribute to the achievement of Council priorities.

Political restrictions

This post is subject to political restriction, which is divided into two categories and relates to the post holder duties:

- Specified posts, statutory posts as well as 'deputy chief officers'
- Sensitive posts, which meet one or both of the following related criteria,
 - Giving advice on a regular basis to the Council itself, to any committee or sub-committee of the Council or any joint committee on which the Council are represented, or where the Council are operating executive arrangements, to the executive of the Council; to any committee of that executive, or to any member of that executive who is a member of the Council;
 - Speaking on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters.

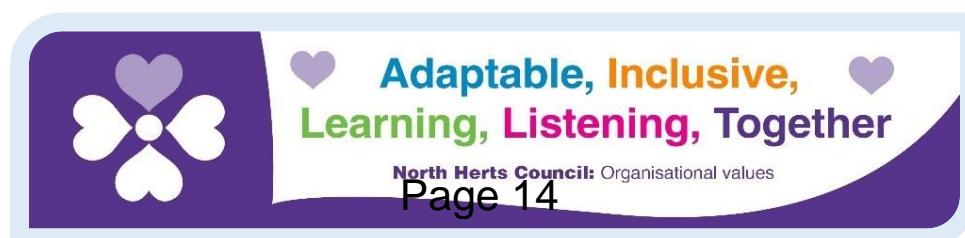
Both of the above apply to this post. The postholder must therefore be aware that in accepting this post, they are required to confirm that they will conform to these political restrictions and that they will be included as conditions of their formal contract of employment with the Council.

Please follow this link to read your general responsibilities:

[General responsibilities for employees | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/employees/general-responsibilities)

Key Requirements:

Essential
desirable



Qualifications:	Qualified Solicitor or Barrister.	E
	A degree or equivalent in a relevant subject	E
	Extensive post qualification practice.	E
	Current practising certificate.	E
	Management training and/or experience	D
	Evidence of Continued Professional Development	E
Job related experience & knowledge:	Experience of effective management of team of mixed ability/qualifications including prioritisation of team's workload.	E
	Track record of delivery of high-quality services.	E
	Flexible and proactive service delivery.	E
	Experience of advising in senior capacity to Chief Officer's/ Directors and Members.	E
	Experience in using resources and budgets.	E
	Political skills and sensitivity.	E
	High level of legal expertise and sound knowledge of local authority environment and law.	E
	Knowledge of the national legislative and policy agenda facing local government.	E
	Knowledge of the legal framework relating to ethical standards and the duties of the Monitoring Officer and the ability to apply that knowledge.	E
	The leadership and track record to gain the commitment of staff and to motivate them to work co-operatively and flexibly.	E
	Experience of presenting and advising at Committee.	E
	A record of achievement and innovation in a related field to this post.	E
	IT literate with experience of utilising IT solutions to improve efficiency of service delivery.	E
	Understanding of budgetary control, financial management and experience of operating these.	E
	Demonstrable formal and/or informal advocacy experience.	D
	Knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Regulatory Powers Act 2000 and relevant Senior Responsible Officer requirements.	D

Skills & attributes required for the role:	Ability to build, motivate and maintain a team through change and improvement.	E
	Ability to draft agreements, reports, legal documents, briefs to Counsel and advise on same.	E
	The interpersonal and communication skills necessary to gain and sustain the confidence and commitment of service users and partners to the work of the section and the Council. Ability to develop effective liaison arrangements within the Service, across the Council and with external agencies.	E
	Leadership skills that motivate and inspire staff.	E
	Effective presentation and negotiation skills.	E
	Excellent written and oral communication skills with experience of writing clear, concise and accurate reports for senior managers and Members.	E
	Ability to recruit, develop, train, appraise and manage staff at a senior level.	E
	Ability to develop effective liaison arrangements within the Directorate, across the Council and with external agencies.	E
	Analytical skills to convert strategic management issues into practical implementation.	E
	Ability to produce practical and creative solutions to meet business objectives.	E
	Ability to operate effectively under pressure and to the highest professional standards.	E
	Confident in conversing in fluent English which is sufficient to fulfil all aspects of the role.	E
	Litigation and contracts experience	D
	Broader legal knowledge for example related to access to information and governance.	D
Other:	Knowledge of electoral law.	D
	Successful partnership working.	D
	Ability to promote the organisation's Values and Behaviours through your leadership.	E
	Ability to work effectively as part of a senior level management team.	E
	Ability to promote the image of the Directorate through articulate and confident approach.	E

	This post is subject to a satisfactory Basic check with the Disclosure and Barring Service and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders' Act.	E
	Ability to work unsociable hours.	E
	Commitment, drive and enthusiasm.	E
	Full driving licence and vehicle available for work use.	D

*E = Essential D = Desirable

Signed.....Employee

Date.....

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank