

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held as a Virtual Meeting - Online access on Monday, 23rd November, 2020**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Sayonara Luxton), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Gary Muir)

Councillors John Baldwin, Clive Baskerville, Christine Bateson, Gurpreet Bhangra, Simon Bond, John Bowden, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, David Cannon, Stuart Carroll, Gerry Clark, David Coppinger, Carole Da Costa, Wisdom Da Costa, Jon Davey, Karen Davies, Phil Haseler, Geoff Hill, David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Andrew Johnson, Greg Jones, Lynne Jones, Neil Knowles, Ewan Larcombe, Ross McWilliams, Helen Price, Samantha Rayner, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim, Gurch Singh, Donna Stimson, John Story, Helen Taylor, Amy Tisi, Leo Walters and Simon Werner

Officers: Adele Taylor, Nikki Craig, Russell O'Keefe, Barbara Richardson, Mary Severin, Duncan Sharkey, Karen Shepherd, Louisa Dean and Tracy Hendren

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Targowski

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

53. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions had been received.

54. REFERRALS FROM OTHER BODIES

Appointment of Statutory Officer

Members considered approval of the statutory appointment of Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Johnson proposed the motion in the report.

Councillor Rayner seconded the motion and thanked Mary Severin for her three years of loyal and dedicated service to the council and residents in the role of Monitoring Officer. Mary had served as the guardian of the constitution, contributed to decision making and provided advice on legal matters. She had always been fair and had working on behalf of the residents. Mary had given good notice to enable a full recruitment process to take place. Councillor Rayner thanked the officers involved in facilitating that process. Mary Severin's retirement had provided the opportunity to consider changes including the establishment of a full time Monitoring Officer role. This increased resource would help to strengthen the council.

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Councillor Baldwin thanked the Leader of the Council and officers for organising a COVID-safe face to face interview process. It had made an enormous difference to be able to meet the candidate in person.

Councillor Davey commented that one recently-departed resident, David Knowles-Leak, would have been pleased to hear the Monitoring Officer role would be full time and have wider corporate responsibilities. Mr Knowles-Leak had raised concerns after the last election which may have gone further under different governance.

Councillor Werner extended his thanks to Mary Severin for the last three years' service. He knew how difficult the role was and he was thankful for Mary's support and advice. The new expanded role was important to ensure work continued on improving the governance and decision-making process at the council.

Councillor Stimson thanked Mary Severin, in particular for the support she had provided when Councillor Stimson had been a new Development Management Panel Chairman.

Councillor Jones thanked Mary Severin and commented on their good working relationship. She also thanked officers for the detailed recruitment process. She felt the candidate would be an excellent addition to the council and she welcomed the move to have an in-house legal specialist.

Councillor Walters commented that his dealings with Mary Severin had mainly been in relation to planning matters. Mary had always been thorough and fair and would be missed.

Councillor Hill thanked Mary Severin, who had helped him on a number of occasions. He was extremely grateful for Mary's professionalism, expertise and good humour. She would be missed.

Mary Severin thanked Members for their good wishes and commented that she had enjoyed working with every one of them.

Members continued the debate in Part II, but agreed to minute the decision in Part I.

It was proposed by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Rayner, and:

### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:**

- i) Appoints the candidate named in Appendix A as the Council's Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Law and Strategy with effect from 1 February 2021, on the recommendation of the Appointment Committee.**
- ii) Acknowledges and thanks Mary Severin for her contribution as Monitoring Officer over the past 3 years and notes Mary will continue as Monitoring Officer until the new candidate is in post.**
- iii) The decision be minuted in Part I.**

55. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 6 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.