

Committee: Full Council

Date:

Title: Appointment of the Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer

Tuesday, 14
October 2025

Report Author: Angela Knight, Strategic Director, Chief Operating Officer
aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk

Summary

1. Following the resignation of the Council's Monitoring Officer, we have undertaken a recruitment process to secure a suitable successor to this Statutory role and be our Head of Legal.
2. The post is on a temporary basis until the 31 May 2026 pending the announcement by Government on the successful Local Government Reorganisation Business Case.
3. The recommended candidate is currently employed with us via an agency and has been employed with us since March 2024.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that the Council appoints Carolyn Forster to the post of Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer effective from a date to be determined by the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the HR Manager.

Financial Implications

5. The post is a permanent part of the staff establishment but is currently being offered on a temporary basis and costs are fully covered within the salary budget.

Situation

6. The recommended candidate, Carolyn Forster is a qualified solicitor with 25 years' experience of working in the public sector and has been employed by Uttlesford Council since March 2024.
7. During Carolyn's time with us she has provided legal support in a number of areas and has become a trusted advisor across the council. A few key areas where Carolyn has either supported or directly lead is listed below.
 - Licensing and Planning Committee
 - Deputised for the Monitoring Officer at Council meetings
 - Deputised as Head of Legal during absences
 - Supported Democratic Services

- Provided Member and Officer training on various areas of legal work and responsibilities within the council

8. Carolyn's previous experience includes the following

- Statutory Monitoring Officer, promotion of ethical standards, oversight of member conduct
- Adviser to complaints panels, licensing boards, planning committees
- Handling internal appeals, misconduct investigations, whistleblowing, discrimination claims, and drafting employment protocols.
- Drafting planning agreements, advising on local plans, and conducting planning inquiries and appeals
- Member of strategic leadership teams
- Lead officer for constitutional working groups, drafting decision notices, and advising on administrative best practices

Risk Analysis

9.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Council does not appoint a new Monitoring Officer.	1	2	Council to approve the appointment

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.