South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Cyd-bwyllgor corfforaethol De-Dwyrain Cymru

Report for:	ACTION
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO

For Consideration By	Corporate Joint Committee
Report Title	Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer and Appointments Sub-Committee Update
Report of	Kellie Beirne, Chief Executive Officer
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Date to be Considered	2 June 2025
Implementation Date	Immediate effect
Affected Council Areas	All
Keywords / Index	Appointments; Chief Officers; Statutory Officer; Senior Executive Team; CCR Energy Ltd

Report Summary

1. This report is in three parts:

   1.1 Part 1 sets out the recommendations of the Appointments Sub-Committee in respect of the appointment of an Interim Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer;

   1.2 Part 2 sets out the endorsement of the Appointments Sub-Committee to the Chief Executive's recommendation to secure a fixed-term internal secondment into the role of Director of Regional Growth; and

   1.3 Part 3 sets out the additional interim duties payment to be awarded to CCR Energy's Head of Operations, in order to maintain safe site operations and priority activity.

Recommendations

2. The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee is asked to:

   2.1 approve the appointment of Mark Watkins as Interim Strategic Director of Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer;

   2.2 Approve the internal advertisement of a 12-month secondment opportunity for the post of Director of Regional Growth;

2.3 Note the Chief Executive's action to approve an honorarium payment to CCR Energy's Head of Operations, to reflect additional duties that the postholder is undertaking to provide interim management capacity and support covering the period December – ongoing.

Reasons for Recommendations

Part 1 – Appointment of Interim Director of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

3. Part 2 of the Schedule to the SEW Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 states that the CJC must make such arrangements for staffing as are necessary to the discharge of its functions. The meeting of SEW Corporate Joint Committee on 4 December 2024 agreed the Executive Team structure – as proposed by the Chief Executive. In May and July 2024, CJC approved the appointments of the team comprising Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Regional Growth and Investment, Strategic Director of Resources (statutory s.151 Officer), Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships and Strategic Director of Legal and Governance (statutory Monitoring Officer).

4. The permanent post of Strategic Director of Legal and Governance was subsequently not taken up by the candidate and interim arrangements put in place by the then CCR Regional Cabinet in October 2023 have instead been retained. Over the period of July 2024 to date, several unsuccessful attempts have been made to recruit to the permanent post, which remains vacant.

5. As a new and fledgling public body, deficits currently exist around development of a recognised employer brand and an identifiable and effective recruitment platform. Whilst specialist external support has been commissioned via agency, Venn Group, to support this in respect of permanent recruitment to the statutory Monitoring Officer position, in the interim, a locum appointment has been made and it is proposed that Mark Watkins is appointed as Interim Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and statutory Monitoring Officer. It should be further noted that a second locum appointment has been made to the post of Head of Legal and Jill Byron will take up the role as Deputy Monitoring Officer.

6. Work is underway in collaboration with Venn Group to support building of a bespoke recruitment platform to recruit to the permanent positions of both Strategic Director of Legal and Governance (statutory Monitoring Officer) and Head of Legal (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and the Appointments Sub-Committee will be kept appraised of this.

Part 2 – Fixed-term internal secondment to post of Director of Regional Growth

7. Following the departure of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Regional Growth and Investment, in March 2025, the post remains vacant. The role is a non-statutory one and provides a critical role in heading up and leading the City Deal programme and the new SEW Investment Zone.

8. Given the wider capacity pressures, it is proposed that, rather than undergo a full market recruitment exercise at this time, a 12-month internal secondment opportunity is created for the Director of Regional Growth aspect only, i.e. forgoing the Deputy Chief Executive duties, and set at salary level commensurate with the other Director posts in the structure. It is suggested that an internal advert is placed immediately across CCR and its ten constituent councils with the outcomes of this process to be reported into the next meeting of the CJC in July 2025.

Part 3 – Additional Duties CCR Energy Head of Operations

9. Since the end of December, capacity gaps exist in relation to senior management at CCR Energy Ltd. In the interim period, the current Head of Operations has picked up these important additional duties, which include enhanced Health and Safety responsibilities, team leadership and management duties, board liaison duties and compliance with Company Law, commissioning of advice and specialist support, and general management of a site on which high-risk demolition is occurring and there are a number of environmental obligations. The role has also included aspects of investor relations and inward investment and requires an ongoing 'holding position' on a more narrowly defined set of objectives – to be reflected in the forthcoming interim business plan – until the current set of issues related to post-litigation review are concluded.

10. CCRE's current Head of Operations remains a permanent employee of CCR, seconded to the position at Aberthaw. Since the current CCRE Business Plan ended on 31 March 2025, it is appropriate that the Chief Executive's proposal to agree salary augmentation consistent with the above additional duties is noted by CJC, in addition to being supported by the CCRE Board Chair. Given the level of additional responsibility and parity with CCR salary and grading structure, it is proposed that this is set again at CCR Director level (c£97k). This will be kept under review in conjunction with the Options Report to inform the future operating model for the company, as detailed elsewhere on the meeting agenda.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

11. The processes set out in this report have been conducted with regard to Corporate HR and Finance policies and procedures and in line with the Terms of Reference of the Appointments Sub-Committee and Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Resources and s.151 Officer

12. The CJC's 2025/26 approved budget includes the necessary resources to meet the costs associated with the appointment of the Monitoring Officer (interim) and the Director of Regional Growth (interim). Any one-off costs arising from handover arrangements and the use of specialist agency recruitment support will be met from underspends against the wider CJC employee budget in 2025/26.

13. The total monthly cost of the proposed honorarium for the Head of Operations is £2,142 (inclusive of on-costs) and amounts to circa £7,500 when backdated to the 20 December 2024. In 2024/25 the Head of Operations costs were shared on a 80% / 20% basis between the CCR Energy Ltd and the CJC. CCR Energy's Management Accounts outlined an underspend of circa £974k at Month 11, providing sufficient headroom to accommodate its share of the proposed honorarium costs in financial year 2024/25. The CJC will meet its 20% share of the 2024/25 costs from within existing resources.

14. It is understood that the arrangements will only continue for a short period into 2025/26. However, it is suggested that CCR Energy may wish to utilise an element of its final 2024/25 underspend to create a specific Earmarked Reserve, the purpose of which will be to meet the 2025/26 costs associated with the honorarium arrangements.

15. The ongoing financial implications resulting from these arrangements will be fully set out in the 2025/26 Budget Monitoring Reports presented to the CJC, as well as the Options Report (to inform the future operating model for CCR Energy Ltd) referred to above.

Comments of the Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Appointment of Monitoring Officer (Interim)

16. Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended by Regulation 7 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021) places a duty on the CJC to appoint a Monitoring Officer.

17. The Monitoring Officer is a statutory Chief Officer post and, pursuant to the CJC's Employment Procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation, their appointment is a matter reserved to the CJC following the recommendation of the Appointments Sub-Committee.

18. The designation of a Deputy Monitoring Officer is a personal appointment of the Monitoring Officer.

Director of Regional Growth (Interim)

19. The post of Director of Regional Growth is an existing vacant post within the new staffing structure which has been job evaluated as a Chief Officer grade post. Pursuant to the CJC's Employment Procedure Rules, both the method of appointment (in this case an internal secondment rather than a publicly advertised post) and any actual appointment requires the approval of the CJC following a recommendation from the Appointments Sub-Committee. At this stage, the Chief Executive simply requests approval to move forwards with internal advertisement.

Head of Operations, CCR Energy Ltd

20. Finally, Members are asked to note that the Head of Operations at CCR Energy Ltd is, and has been since December 2024, undertaking additional duties in the absence of other key members of CCRE staff. These include some, but not all, of the responsibilities of a higher graded post. CCRE's Head of Operations is seconded to CCRE by CCR.

21. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors of CCRE, proposes to augment the salary of the individual concerned during the period in which she is discharging additional duties over and above those set out in her existing job description.

22. The payment of an honorarium is suitable when a person undertakes some additional responsibilities of a higher graded post. The approval of an honorarium is within the delegated authority of the Chief Executive in consultation with HR. However, as a proportion of the payment will need to be made by CCRE, the Chair of the CCRE Board of Directors has also been consulted.

Staffing Implications

23. The staffing implications associated with this report are self-evident.

Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

24. There are no implications directly associated with this report, save to say, the process is undertaken in line with objectives of CCR's HR policies and procedures.

Sustainability and Climate Considerations

25. There are no implications directly associated with this report.

Risk Management

26. The appointment of an able and committed Senior Executive Team is required to:

- ensure the requisite senior leadership capacity is in place to lead, develop and deliver on the CJC agenda;
- ensure capacity is in place in respect of statutory officer positions: Chief Executive Officer, s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer;
- safeguard the reputational interests of CCR by promoting high standards and ensuring openness, probity and accountability.

Consultation

27. The Senior Executive Team structure for CCR was approved at the meeting of the SEWCJC on 4 December 2023. The Chair of the Board of CCRE has been consulted in relation to this report.

Welsh Language Implications

28. Due regard has been had to Welsh Language implications.

Well-being of Future Generations

29. In developing the Recommendations of this report, regard has been had to the well-being duty arising under the to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

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2 June 2025

Appendices
None

Background Papers
None