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## NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

**6 February, 2026**

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**TITLE:** Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

**AUTHOR:** Alwen Williams, Chief Executive

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### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1. To recommend the appointment of a Monitoring Officer.

### **2. DECISION SOUGHT**

2.1. Approve the appointment of Mark Watkins as Monitoring Officer.

### **3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

3.1. 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.

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

3.3. The CJC has approved the budget for the appointment of a Full-Time post of a Legal and Governance Officer who would be the Monitoring Officer. That function is currently undertaken on a part time basis by Iwan Evans, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer at Cyngor Gwynedd. Iwan intends to step down from the role.

3.4. A number of practical and governance challenges have emerged as the CJC's activities have developed and as regional working has further embedded. These include:

- Operational pressures and risk due to shared officer capacity, with dual demands of both (Cyngor Gwynedd) and regional (CJC) responsibilities.
- General lack of capacity and impact of conflicting demands on officers.
- Potential conflicts of interest for statutory officers who must advise both Cyngor Gwynedd and the CJC.
- Risk of perceptions of independence and impartiality, especially in circumstances where CJC advice or decisions may have direct consequences for individual councils.
- Clarity of accountability and risk management where statutory responsibilities may conflict between the two organisations.

- 3.5. On Friday 23rd January the CJC's budget for 2026/27 was agreed. Provision is made in the budget for x1FTE for a Monitoring Officer and immediate steps have been taken to identify a suitable candidate to undertake the role on a full-time interim basis to allow for the recruitment of a permanent officer to take place.
- 3.6. A search of the interim market has identified Mark Watkins, a highly experienced leader in the local government sector and a practicing locum solicitor who is concluding a period of eight months as Interim Strategic Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer with Cardiff Capital Region's Corporate Joint Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2026. Mark has a strong track record in leading transformational interim assignments, including rewriting constitutions, strengthening governance, reshaping professional teams, improving performance, and driving efficiency and income generation. His recent experience undertaking this role for the Cardiff Capital Region CJC will be invaluable for North Wales.
- 3.7. To secure Mark into the role, a decision was needed quickly, therefore in order to address these matters and to allow time to develop the permanent arrangements Mark has been contracted as a locum commencing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February to assume the duties of the role. Iwan Evans, the CJC's Monitoring Officer will be handing over his responsibilities during the coming weeks. It is appropriate that Mark is also appointed to the Monitoring Officer role.

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**STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:**

i. **Monitoring Officer:**

Has a personal interest in the report at the date of writing.

ii. **Statutory Finance Officer:**

"No objections to the decision sought."