

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: **Appointment of Interim Section 151 Officer.**

Meeting/Date: Council – 18 May 2022.

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services Manager.

Ward(s) affected: All.

Executive Summary:

Local Authorities have a duty under Section 151 of the Local Government Act to 'make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall ensure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs'. Since September 2021, the functions of the Chief Financial Officer have been undertaken by an Interim Chief Finance Manager pending the formalisation of more permanent arrangements as part of a restructure of the Council's Senior Leadership Team.

The restructure of the Council's Senior Leadership Team is now complete and recruitment is underway for the new post of Director of Corporate Services, who it is intended will be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer. However, following the departure of the Interim Finance Officer at the end of April 2022 there is a need to put in place a further interim arrangement pending the conclusion of the recruitment process. This report seeks the Council's formal approval to this proposal.

It is

RECOMMENDED

that Philip Simpkins, be appointed as the Council's S151 Officer on an interim basis with immediate effect until the formal appointment of a permanent Officer in post.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Local Authorities have a duty under Section 151 of the Local Government Act to 'make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall ensure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs'. The functions of the Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer were previously undertaken by the Council's Interim Finance Manager who left the Council's service on 29th April 2022.
- 1.2 Article 12 of the Council's Constitution describes the functions of the Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

- 1.1 The Council is required to designate one of its officers as the Chief Financial Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. This appointment must be made by full Council.
- 1.2 The functions of the Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer were previously undertaken by the Council's Interim Finance Manager pending the formalisation of more permanent arrangements as part of a restructure of the Council's Senior Management Team.
- 2.1 It is a legal requirement that the Council has a Section 151 Officer in place and Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Chief Financial Officer to be a member of one of the six chartered accountancy bodies in Great Britain and Ireland.
- 2.2 Following a recent restructure of the Council's Senior Leadership Structure, it is recommended that the newly established post of Director of Corporate Services be designated as the Section 151 Officer. The role of Deputy Section 151 Officer will be undertaken by Ms S Russell-Surtees. However there is a need to put in place a further interim arrangement pending the conclusion of the recruitment process.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 3.1 This proposal enables the Council to fulfil its duty to appoint an Officer who is responsible for the Council's financial affairs and ensure that the necessary governance arrangements are in place for Huntingdonshire District Council.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The District Council's Constitution

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