
Meeting: Council
Date: 20 January 2011
Subject: Appointment of Interim Chief Finance/Section 151 Officer
Report of: Portfolio holder for Finance, Governance and People
Summary: The report proposes that the Director of Customer and Shared Services be authorised to make an interim appointment to the position of Chief Finance Officer pending the making of a substantive appointment to the post of Assistant Director, Financial Services.

Contact Officer: Richard Ellis, Director of Customer and Shared Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The appointment of a Chief Finance Officer is critical to the delivery of the Council's budget strategy.

Financial:

The costs of this appointment will be met from within the existing budget.

Legal:

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provide that local authorities are required to make proper arrangements for the administration of their financial affairs, including the appointment of an officer to have responsibility for the administration of those affairs.

Risk Management:

The appointment of an interim Chief Finance Officer will help to ensure the effective management of the Council's financial affairs pending the appointment to the post of Assistant Director, Finance Services and will mitigate the risks to the authority whilst that post is vacant.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None specifically.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The Council's responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities will be observed in carrying out the recruitment processes for the post of Assistant Director, Financial Services.

Community Safety:

None specifically.

Sustainability:

None specifically.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. that the Director of Customer and Shared Services be authorised to make an interim appointment to the post of Chief Finance/Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the members of the Appointments Sub-Committee.**

Background to the Decision

1. The Council's Constitution provides that the Assistant Director, Financial Services is designated as the council's Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer). This designation was formally approved by the Council on 24 June 2010.
2. The current Assistant Director, Financial Services has recently accepted a position with another local authority and will be leaving the Council's employment during February 2011.
3. Arrangements are in hand for the appointment of a substantive Assistant Director, Financial Services but this appointment will not be completed before the existing Assistant Director leaves. For this reason, it will be necessary to make an interim appointment to ensure that an appropriately qualified person is designated Chief Finance Officer until such time as an Assistant Director, Financial Services joins the Council's employment. An interim Assistant Director, Financial Services has been recruited to shadow the existing post holder and to provide continuity, but the Constitution provides that the appointment of the Chief Finance Officer should be made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.
4. A similar situation arose in June 2010 on the departure of the Monitoring Officer. On that occasion, the Council authorised the Director of Customer and Shared Services to appoint one of the Deputy Monitoring Officers as interim Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.

Conclusion and Next Steps

5. Accordingly, the Council is requested to authorise the Director of Customer and Shared Services to appoint an interim Chief Finance Officer, following consultation with the members of the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Background Papers:

None