

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT
AND
REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE JOINT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

17TH MARCH 2026, AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Co-Chair), S. Harvey (Co-Chair), R. Bailes, W. Hartnett, R. J. Hunter, J. Spilsbury and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr J. Leach, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs B. Talbot and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

15 **NOMINATION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

A nomination was received for Councillor S. Harvey to chair the meeting.

The nomination was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor J. Spilsbury.

RESOLVED that

Councillor S. Harvey be appointed to Chair the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee.

16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor P. McDonald.

17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

18 **RECOMMENDATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE AS DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER (TO FOLLOW)**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager presented a report detailing the outcomes of a recent process for the recruitment of a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils.

The Committee was informed that the Members who had been appointed to the Appointments Panel had been involved in interviewing the candidates for the position. At the end of the process, the Panel had proposed that Mr James Walton should be appointed to the position. This proposal had received unanimous support from every Member of the Panel.

Members were advised that as this was a statutory officer position, there was a requirement for Council to agree to the appointment. Unfortunately, there was not due to be a meeting of Council at either authority until the scheduled Annual Council meetings in May 2026. Concerns were raised that delaying the appointment until this point would potentially cause considerable disruption at the authorities. Therefore, it was proposed that, subject to the Joint Appointment Committee's endorsement of Mr Walton's nomination, his appointment should be agreed through both Councils' urgent decision processes.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the nomination and recruitment process in detail and in doing so commented on a number of points:

- The reasons why the Appointments Panel had concluded that Mr Walton would be the best candidate for the position. The Committee was informed that Mr Walton had been the most experienced candidate who had been interviewed, including prior experience of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and had stood out as the best candidate.
- The qualifications required for the position. Members were advised that Section 151 Officers needed to be qualified and registered with a professional accountancy body and Mr Walton fulfilled this brief.
- The assistance that had been provided by external recruitment consultants, Penna, which Members praised.
- The technical assessments that all of the candidates had been required to complete.
- Mr Walton's prior experience of working in District Councils, including with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Unitary Authorities, which would assist with Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils' preparation for LGR.
- The information that had been shared with all candidates about agile working arrangements in place in Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, including the requirement for the successful candidate to attend evening meetings.
- The potential for the Joint Appointments Committee to be provided with a precis of each candidate's achievements for future senior officer recruitment processes.
- The potential for psychometric testing to be introduced for future senior officer recruitment processes.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor B. Hartnett.

RECOMMENDED each Council

- 1) NOTE that the Joint Appointments Panel had completed a rigorous selection process to recruit a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer;**

- 2) **Approve the appointment of Mr James Walton as Director for Finance and Section 151 Officer (as an employee of Bromsgrove District Council). The commencement date would be as soon as possible, subject to references, medical and eligibility checks and his notice period; and**
- 3) **NOTE that the salary agreed for the Director of Finance and Section 151 was within the range approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**

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URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

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MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee held on 14th January 2026 were submitted.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor S. Harvey and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee held on 14th January 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

The meeting closed at 5.23 p.m.

Chairman