

Joint Appointments Committee 2026

14th January

Arrangements for the Appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils

Relevant Lead Councillors		Councillor Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council and Councillor Sharon Harvey, Leader of Redditch Borough Council
Lead Councillors Consulted		
Relevant Assistant Director		Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
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Wards Affected		All wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		Not applicable
Relevant Council Priority		
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Appointments Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) To NOTE the report from Penna recruitment consultants, at Appendix 1.**
- 2) A recruitment campaign commence prioritising a permanent appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer as the preferred outcome, while remaining open-minded to interim or fixed term candidates should exceptional individuals emerge during the process.**
- 3) Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services, following consultation with the Leaders of Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils, to determine the most appropriate course of action for the**

**Joint Appointments
Committee
2026**

14th January

recruitment process, as detailed in resolution 2 above, based on the outcome of the campaign.

- 4) to establish a Joint Appointments Panel to consider the shortlisted candidates prior to the approval of the successful candidate at Council;**
- 5) to agree nominations to the Joint Appointments Panel for the appointment of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer.**
- 6) to agree that the quorum for meetings of the Joint Appointments Panel for the recruitment of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer should be four Members, which must include at least one Councillor from each authority and at least one Leader.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Following the departure of the Councils' Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, the authorities have temporary arrangements in place in respect of the statutory officer element of this post.
- 2.2** The Joint Appointments Committee previously considered this situation in November 2025 and proposed a way forward.
- 2.3** This report invites the Joint Appointments Committee to consider an update on the current situation and to determine the next steps for the appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils.
- 2.4** Members are also invited to consider an update from external recruitment consultants, Penna. Penna has provided an update on the current market for Section 151 Officers. The report from Penna also provides Members with an overview of the relative cost benefit analysis of a permanent appointment compared with an interim appointment of a Section 151 Officer. This report can be viewed at Appendix 1.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

Joint Appointments Committee 2026

14th January

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- 3.1 The position of Section 151 Officer is a statutory officer post for local authorities.
 - 3.2 The previous Section 151 Officer was employed by Bromsgrove District Council and made available to Redditch Borough Council under shared services arrangements to perform such duties as were required by the post at Redditch Borough Council.
 - 3.3 The previous post holder departed from the organisations in October 2025.
 - 3.4 To ensure compliance with statutory requirements to have a Section 151 Officer, both authorities agreed, through urgent decisions, taken on 30th October 2025 in Redditch and on 31st October 2025 in Bromsgrove, to appoint the Councils' Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services as their acting Section 151 Officer. As the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services is employed by Redditch Borough Council, there was a need for Redditch Borough Council to agree to make her available to Bromsgrove District Council under shared services arrangements to perform such duties as were required by the post at Bromsgrove District Council.
 - 3.5 There was a requirement for urgent decisions to be taken in respect of this matter because the previous Section 151 Officer left the organisations at the end of October 2025 and there were no Council meetings due to take place at either authority prior to the expiration of his contract.
 - 3.6 The Joint Appointments Committee held a meeting on 12th November 2025 to consider options for the appointment of a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer. At that meeting, Members agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to shortlist candidates for the position for a temporary period of six months. Members also agreed to establish a Joint Appointments Panel to consider the shortlisted candidates prior to the appointment of successful candidate.
 - 3.7 Following that meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee initial arrangements were made in line with the position that had been agreed by Members. However, it was unfortunately not possible to progress with the recruitment process of a temporary basis as originally envisaged.
 - 3.8 Consequently, the Joint Appointments Committee is now being asked to consider launching a recruitment campaign to appoint a Director of

**Joint Appointments
Committee
2026**

14th January

Finance and Section 151 Officer for the two Councils to serve on a permanent, full-time basis as a preferred way forward, whilst remaining open-minded to interim or fixed term candidates should exceptional individuals emerge during the process. To secure a strong and credible field of candidates and to maximise the likelihood of making a successful and sustainable appointment, it is recommended that a targeted search commence. Further detail relating to this recruitment process is available at Appendix 1 to the report.

- 3.9 The above balanced and flexible approach provides the best opportunity to attract a credible and competitive field of candidates in the current market.
- 3.10 Members will note that this report deals exclusively with the appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer and that this is a departure from the post currently sitting on the staffing establishment. This report seeks to disaggregate the current post and in doing so creates a new post of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer as it is felt that this would result in a more resilient and focussed approach moving forward.
- 3.11 Members are asked to note that this approach will result in the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources needing to be considered as part of a wider Senior Leadership review.
- 3.12 Members are asked to note that any final decision in respect of the appointment of a permanent Section 151 Officer would need to be referred to full Council at both authorities for approval.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Section 151 Officer is the Councils' Chief Finance Officer and is responsible for the proper administration of the authorities' financial affairs.
- 4.2 The post of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer has been evaluated by West Midlands Employers to be £114,282 – £118,694. It is anticipated that this will result in these proposals being financed through existing resources, however, the interim contingency arrangements may result in additional expenditure which would require the approval of Council.

**Joint Appointments
Committee
2026**

14th January

- 4.3 There may be future redundancy implications due to for example Local Government Reorganisation. It is however, not possible to calculate the costs given each potential candidate's circumstances will be different.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Councils are required to nominate an officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The relevant wording states that: - "Without prejudice to section 111 above, every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs."
- 5.2 Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) must be a member of a specified accountancy body.
- 5.3 It is a legal requirement that the appointment of the Section 151 Officer, as a statutory officer, is made by full Council. This is set out in the relevant regulations (The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended) Schedule I Part II) which are reproduced in the Officer Employment Rules in both authorities' Constitutions.
- 5.4 Section 113 the Local Government Act 1972 permits Councils to enter an agreement to place the services of their staff at the disposal of other local authorities. This legislative power currently applies to the temporary arrangements whereby Redditch Borough Council is making the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services available to Bromsgrove District Council to serve as their acting Section 151 Officer. The arrangement would also apply in future to Bromsgrove District Council, as the employing authority of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer post, making the officer available to Redditch Borough Council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 This report has been prepared for the Joint Appointments Committee's consideration in a context of ongoing Local Government

**Joint Appointments
Committee
2026**

14th January

Reorganisation. Under the Government's proposals to reorganise local government in two-tier authority areas, both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils are due to cease to exist from May 2028 onwards. There is the potential that this situation could deter some candidates from applying for the position of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer with the Councils (see also section 4.3).

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The proposals detailed in this report are designed to support the following Council priorities:

Bromsgrove – Financial stability and sustainability.

Redditch – Financial stability, organisational stability and supported governance.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 No specific equalities and diversity implications have been identified.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that potential appropriate candidates for the position of Section 151 Officer for the Councils may be deterred from applying for the position in a context of Local Government Reorganisation.

- 7.2 As the position of Section 151 Officer is a statutory officer post, the Councils must ensure that an appropriately qualified individual is appointed at all times, including on a temporary basis where necessary. Failure to do so would place the Council at risk of reputational damage, would undermine corporate governance arrangements and would result in non-compliance with legal requirements.

- 7.3 There is a risk that, should the Council take significant time to recruit a Section 151 Officer, this could create a stressful environment for the Council's Financial Services team.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

**Joint Appointments
Committee
2026**

14th January

Appendix 1 – Exempt Information

Background papers

Bromsgrove District Council – Urgent Decision (taken 31st October 2025): [Bromsgrove Urgent Decision - Section 151 Officer](#)

Redditch Borough Council – Urgent Decision (taken 30th October 2025): [Redditch Urgent Decision - Section 151 Officer](#)

Joint Appointments Committee Report, (considered on 12th November 2025):

Bromsgrove District Council website: [Report to the Joint Appointments Committee - 12th November 2025](#)

Redditch Borough Council website: [Report to the Joint Appointments Committee - 12th November 2025](#)