

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Appointment of an interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

On 12th November 2025 the Joint Appointments Committee met to discuss arrangements for the appointment of a Section 151 Officer and Director of Finance following the departure of the previous office holder. Members agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to shortlist potential candidates and to establish an Appointments Panel to undertake interviews. Unfortunately, whilst this process commenced, it was not possible to progress with this process.

The current acting Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer has been acting up in her role since late October 2025. In the context of the busy budget setting period, she now needs to concentrate on her substantive role of Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services and Deputy Section 151 Officer and has highlighted the value in appointing another candidate as interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer.

In line with the Council's procurement rules the Chief Executive has approached Penna recruitment consultants via a framework and they have considered potential agency candidates. Penna have identified an experienced candidate, who would be an agency member of staff, who could be appointed interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer: Ms Julie Lorraine.

The position of Section 151 Officer is a statutory officer post. As such, the Council is 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." 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.

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 at Part 17 of the Constitution. Unfortunately, there are not due to be any Council meetings prior to 21st January 2026. This would also not provide sufficient time to follow the structured appointments process to employ a new permanent Section 151 Officer, involving the work of the Joint Appointments Committee.

The Director of Finance and Section 151 post is a senior officer position that is shared between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils. Section 113 of 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.

Bromsgrove District Council is the employing authority for the position of Section 151 Officer. Subject to Members' approval of Ms Julie Lorraine's appointment as interim Section 151 Officer,

she will need to be made available by Bromsgrove District Council under the shared services arrangements to perform such duties as are required by their post for Redditch Borough Council.

The position of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer has been evaluated by West Midlands Employers to be £114,282 - £118,694. Whilst funding is built into the budget to support employment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer on a permanent basis, additional financial support would be required to support these proposed interim arrangements due to the additional costs associated with agency staffing. All costs for the position will be divided equally, on a 50:50 ratio, between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council.

It has been identified that the costs are likely in the region of £180k for a period of six months (to be shared by the two Councils). This figure includes the payment made to the individual and the fee attached by the recruiting agency.

The current budget of £140k for the post of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer has been fully committed for 2025/26. The additional requirement of £60k in 2025/26 can be accommodated from within the Finance Reserve.

For 2026/27, it is estimated that of the £120k covering the remaining four months, £48k will be funded from within the existing budget and £72k will be funded from the Finance Reserve. It is proposed that this interim appointment will continue until such time as a replacement Section 151 Officer commences employment with Bromsgrove District Council.

Decision: To consider and agree the temporary appointment of an interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Council.

Date: 13th January 2026

RESOLVED:

- 1) To approve the temporary appointment of Ms Julie Lorraine as interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, to fulfil the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government 1972, until such time as a replacement Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer commences employment with Bromsgrove District Council; and**
- 2) Subject thereto, Ms Julie Lorraine to be made available under the shared services arrangements with Redditch Borough Council to perform such duties as are required in her capacity as acting Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for Redditch Borough Council.**

Grounds for Urgency:

This decision needs to be taken urgently because it has not been possible to appoint a replacement Section 151 Officer in a timely manner and the current acting Section 151 Officer now needs to return to her substantive post during the busy budget setting period.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

.....
Chief Executive

.....
Dated

.....
Monitoring Officer

.....
Dated

.....
Leader

.....
Dated

.....
Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board

.....
Dated

.....
Chairman

.....
Dated