

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURES

Subject: Appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Brief Statement of Subject Matter:

At a meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee held on 14th January 2026, Members agreed to commence a recruitment campaign prioritising the permanent appointment of a Director of Finance as the Council's Section 151 Officer. The recruitment campaign was subsequently launched with support from Penna recruitment consultants. Candidates were shortlisted and a panel of elected Members from the Joint Appointments Committee were subsequently involved in the interviews with short listed candidates.

At a subsequent meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee on 17th March 2026 Members agreed to recommend that, subject to successful reference and health checks and to members of the Cabinet not raising any objections to the appointment, James Walton be appointed to the position of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer at the Council.

Currently, the authority has an interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer. However, there is a need to make a permanent appointment in order to provide continuity and stability within Financial Services. This will also assist with efficient budget management as Local Government Reorganisation progresses.

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 20th May 2026. To delay making a decision until this point could deter the best candidate from accepting the position and could also create uncertainty within Financial Services.

There is a requirement under the Officer Employment Procedure rules in the Council's constitution, to ensure that the Leader and any other Cabinet members are notified and have no objections to the offer of appointment for a Statutory Officer post. This must occur before an offer of appointment is made. In this instance, Cabinet members have been contacted following the Joint Appointments Committee meeting that took place on 17th March 2026.

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 James Walton's appointment as Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, he 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. All costs for the position will be divided equally, on a 50:50 ratio, between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council.

It was previously agreed in January 2026 that the Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer will remain in post until such time as a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer commences employment with the Council. This will ensure that the Council can continue to fulfil its statutory obligation to have a designated Section 151 Officer throughout any notice period for the successful candidate.

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

Date: 18th March 2026

RESOLVED:

- 1) To approve the appointment of James Walton as Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, to fulfil the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, subject to satisfactory reference, medical and other eligibility checks and to no objections being raised by members of the Cabinet.**
- 2) Subject thereto, James Walton to be made available under the shared services arrangements with Redditch Borough Council to perform such duties as are required in his capacity as Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for Redditch Borough Council.**

Grounds for Urgency:

This decision needs to be taken urgently because there is not due to be another Council meeting until the Annual Council meeting on 20th May 2026. A delay in appointing a permanent Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer until May could deter the most appropriate candidate from accepting the position which would impact on the Council's ability to achieve best value. The delay could also create uncertainty within the Financial Services team and impact on service continuity.

DECISION APPROVED BY:

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Chief Executive

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Dated

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Monitoring Officer

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Dated

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Interim Section 151 Officer

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Dated

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Leader
(Councillor May)

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Dated

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Chairman, Overview & Scrutiny Board
(Councillor McDonald)

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Dated

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Chairman
(Councillor Evans)

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Dated