
Designation of Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)

Background and context

- 1** The Section 151 Officer is one of three statutory posts each local authority must have (with the head of paid service and the Monitoring Officer) and the power to designate an officer as the Section 151 Officer rests with the full County Council.
- 2** The Section 151 Officer (a requirement of s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972) is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. He or she has a number of statutory duties, including the duty to report any unlawful financial activity involving the authority (past, present or proposed) or any failure to set or maintain a balanced budget. The Section 151 Officer must be a qualified accountant belonging to one of the recognised accountancy bodies.
- 3** The post of Director of Finance and Support Services has previously been identified as the appropriate role for holding the s.151 officer responsibilities. That post became vacant on the departure of Katharine Eberhart in September 2022.

Proposal details

- 4** Following a competitive recruitment process, the position of Director of Finance and Support Services has been offered to Taryn Eves who has accepted the role. Ms Eves is currently Director of Financial Management at the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and has previously worked in the London Borough of Bexley. Ms Eves will therefore bring experience to the role which includes responsibility for procurement and IT services. She is a resident of West Sussex and has a good understanding of the county having lived here for many years.
- 5** As Ms Eves will not join the County Council until early November, arrangements have been made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, for an interim officer to take the role. Mr Tony Kirkham, lately chief finance officer at Newcastle City Council, took up the Interim Chief Finance Officer role from 13 September 2022. On behalf of the County Council, the County Chairman confirmed his agreement to these arrangements for the designation of the Council's Chief Finance Officer.
- 6** The Council is now asked to confirm the interim arrangements together with the designation of the permanent Director of Finance and Support Services as Chief Finance Officer, with effect from 8 November 2022.

Recommended

- (1)** That the action taken to approve the designation of the role of Section 151 Officer arising on its vacancy and prior to the arrival of a permanent post holder, as set out in paragraph 5, be approved; and
- (2)** That the statutory role of Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) be vested in the post of Director of Finance and Support Services, to be held by Taryn Eves with effect from 8 November 2022.

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Background papers

None