

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

### **Designation of Section 151 Officer Responsibility 18 September 2018**

#### **Report of the Chief Executive**

##### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To enable the Council to designate an officer to be Section 151 Officer with effect from 15 October 2018.

**This report is public**

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the newly appointed interim Head of Financial Services, Daniel Bates, be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 15 October 2018, for the purposes of section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.**
- (2) That the net cost of the interim appointment (£38K) be met from the Budget Support Reserve.**

##### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Every local authority must make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs; that officer should be designated as the Section 151 Officer. This is a statutory chief officer level responsibility.
- 1.2 The Council's previous S151 Officer recently left the organisation, and the deputy S151 Officer (and current Head of Financial Services) leaves the Council on 14 October 2018. Had the deputy S151 Officer not been leaving the Council, this report would have been to recommend that he would be designated as S151 Officer.
- 1.3 The Council has recently commenced the process to recruit permanently to the post of Head of Finance & S151 Officer. It is envisaged that an appointment to the permanent post will be made during October / November 2018, with a start date of January or February 2019, allowing for a 3 month notice period. This will mean a potential gap, both in the management of the Financial Services team, but also for the role of S151 Officer.
- 1.4 To bridge that gap, an interim manager has been appointed as interim Head of Finance, starting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018, and it is proposed he is designated,

by full Council, as S151 Officer, for the period to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019, by which time a permanent replacement should have joined the Council. Taking the appointment to the end of February will allow for continuity during the budget setting process up to Budget Council. In addition, it will also allow for a period of hand over to the newly appointed Head of Financial Services.

- 1.5 Mr Bates has significant experience in local government and, more recently central government, having worked in the sector for more than 25 years across organisations at all levels, ranging from district councils, to unitary authorities and HM Treasury. He is CIPFA qualified and has acted as S151 and Deputy S151 Officer in other authorities, most recently East Hants District Council and Havant Borough Council.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 It is proposed therefore that Daniel Bates be designated as the S151 Officer for the period from 15 October 2018 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

## **3.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1 Council is asked to approve this designation.

### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

There is no impact.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council is legally obliged to appoint a S151 Officer.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The day rate for Mr Bates is £695, and he will be working 4 days each week.

Other suitable candidates were found for the role, however these were at a substantially higher cost than Mr Bates, with day rates ranging between £853 and £1,036.

Whilst part of the cost of Mr Bates' appointment will be met from the savings of the vacant permanent Head of Finance role, there is additional cost to the Council. The cost of the interim appointment will be £54,210 less vacancy savings of £15,750 leaving £38,460 which will need to be met from the Budget Support Reserve.

### **OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no other resource implications.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer is a statutory role and as stated in the report every Council must have a designated officer to fulfil that role. The interim appointment will ensure the Council fulfils that duty and will provide the necessary professional advice and support during the forthcoming budget setting process.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**Contact Officer:** Susan Parsonage

**Telephone:** 01524 582011

**E-mail:** [sparsonage@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:sparsonage@lancaster.gov.uk)