

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday 16 March 2021

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Appointment of S151 Officer

1.0 Summary

1.1 Council is asked to appoint Alison Scott, the current interim Section 151 Officer to the post of Section 151 Officer and Director of Finance for Watford Borough Council. Alison will remain a Three Rivers employee but will be seconded to Watford for the purposes of her role as S151 Officer.

1.2 A similar report will be taken to Three Rivers District Council Extraordinary Council meeting on 17 March 2021 recommending that they make this appointment as the role is currently shared between the two Council's.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Appointment of Section 151 Officer/Director of Finance is not agreed.	Three Rivers DC and Watford BC do not fulfil their statutory obligations	Internal arrangements will be put in place to cover the requirements of the Section 151 Officer/Director of Finance	Treat	4

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That with effect from 1 April 2021 Alison Scott becomes the S151 and Director of Finance for Watford Borough Council

Further information:

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4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 The council currently employs an interim joint S151 Officer and Director of Finance following the appointment of the previous postholder to the position of Chief Executive of Three Rivers District Council. This interim arrangement has been in place since 3 February 2020.
- 4.2 Council is asked to agree the appointment of Alison Scott currently interim joint S151 Officer and Director of Finance, to the permanent position of S151 Officer and Director of Finance for Three Rivers and Watford from 1 April 2021.
- 4.3 The Section 151 Officer/Director of Finance is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, under the Local Government Act 1972. All Local Authorities must assign Section 151 duties to one named Officer who must be suitably qualified. The Section 151 Officer is required by law to be a suitably qualified individual holding a recognised professional accountancy qualification.
- 4.4 The appointment follows a joint member panel selection process in March 2021, with Alison Scott as the successful candidate.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the post is a Three Rivers employee but Watford pays Three Rivers a 50% contribution towards the salary

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 each council is required to 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. The post holder therefore needs to be an officer of both councils. It is intended that the post holder will be a Three Rivers employee. There is already a formal agreement under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 between the Councils whereby the post holder's services are provided to Watford. Under this provision an employee whose services are used by another local authority will be deemed to be an employee of that local authority for the purposes of discharging any of that authority's functions.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, the recruitment was undertaken in accordance with the Councils recruitment policies and therefore there are no equalities implications.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 There will need to be some backfilling within the Finance Team as a result of the appointment.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 No implications

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 No implications

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 No implications

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.