



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Report To: Employment and Staffing Committee

25 April 2019

Lead Officer: Head of People and Organisational Development

APPOINTMENT OF S151 OFFICER

Purpose

1. This report appraises Employment and Staffing Committee of the requirement to appoint a S151 Officer.

Recommendations

2. That the Employment and Staffing Committee:
 - a) Note that the contract of the current interim postholder ends on 17 May 2019;
 - b) Note that the Council needs to act swiftly to put into effect arrangements and resources so that a handover and smooth transfer of knowledge is achieved before the current postholder leaves the Council;
 - c) Recommend the appointment of Mr Peter Maddock as S151 Officer to full Council with effect from 18 May 2019.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The contract of the current interim postholder ends on 17 May 2019.
4. The Council is in the process of closing accounts, and concluding audits, therefore it is important to act swiftly to put into effect arrangements and resources in place as soon as possible so that a handover and smooth transition is achieved before Mr Palmer leaves the Council.
5. There is a statutory requirement for the Council to appoint an officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires every local authority to appoint a suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of its affairs.
6. Mr Maddock is suitably qualified and experienced and has previously held the position of S151 at Epping Forest District Council. Mr Maddock joined the Council on 15 April 2019 as Deputy Head of Finance.

Background

Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)

7. The S151 role is currently held by Mr Bob Palmer, Interim Executive Director Corporate Services. Mr Palmer's contract ends on 17 May 2019 and he will leave the Council on that date.
8. There is a statutory requirement for the Council to appoint an officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires every local authority to appoint a suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of its affairs. Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as the responsible Chief Finance Officer is a member of a specified accountancy body.
9. The Council is currently embarking on its year end processes. In addition, there are very important issues for SCDC to address, including closure of accounts and conclusion of audits as well as representation on Ermine Street and commercial activities which require such a person. Failure to appoint a S151 Officer exposes the Council to risk.
10. Mr Maddock commenced employment with the Council on 15 April 2019 as Deputy Head of Finance. Mr Maddock is suitably qualified and experienced and has previously held the position of S151 at Epping Forest District Council.
11. The Council's standing orders state that any appointment to the position of Section 151 Officer is to be made by Full Council following the recommendation of such appointment by the Employment and Staffing committee.

Considerations

12. The terms of reference for the Employment and Staffing committee cover the appointment of Section 151 officer and to make recommendations to full Council.
13. In the light of the issues outlined in paragraph 9 above, it is recommended that Mr Maddock commences the role on 18 May 2019 which is the day following the current postholder's leaving date.

Implications

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

Legal

15. These are set out in paragraph 5 and 8 of the report.

Financial

16. None at present

Staffing

17. The Finance team have a number of relatively new members of staff who will benefit from the full time support from an experienced finance lead who can guide and mentor the team to address the concerns in relation to closure of accounts and audit opinion.

Risk Management

18. This is set out in paragraph 9 above.

Equality and Diversity

19. There are no implications.

Climate Change

20. The absence of experience and knowledge at this senior level would impact on taking forward some of the energy projects including commercial opportunities.

Consultations

21. The lead cabinet member for Finance and Staffing has been consulted.

Background Papers

The Council's Constitution
Local Government Act 1972 section 151
Local Government Finance Act 1988 Section 113

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