



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE JOINT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 2026, AT 6.00 PM

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE
MARKET STREET
BROMSGROVE
WORCESTERSHIRE
B61 8DA

MEMBERS: Councillors K. J. May (Co-Chair), Dormer (Co-Chair), R. Bailes, S. Harvey, J. Kane, P. M. McDonald, N. Pioli, S. A. Robinson, J. Spilsbury and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

1. To nominate a Chair for the meeting

Members are asked to note that under the terms of reference for the Joint Appointments Committee the Leaders of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council should take it in turns to Chair meetings of the Committee.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)

5. Report to the Joint Appointments Committee - Executive Director of Governance and Assurance (Pages 9 - 18)

- 6.** To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT AND REDDITCH
BOROUGH COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE JOINT APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

17TH MARCH 2026, AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillors Sharon Harvey (Co-Chair), K May (Co-Chair),
R. Bailes, Bill Hartnett, R Hunter, Jane Spilsbury and P Whittaker

Officers: J Leach, C Felton, B Talbot and J Bayley-Hill

15 **TO NOMINATE A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

A nomination was received for Councillor S. Harvey to chair the meeting.

The nomination was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor J. Spilsbury.

RESOLVED that

Councillor S. Harvey be appointed to Chair the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee.

16 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor P. McDonald.

17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

18 **RECOMMENDATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE AS DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER (TO FOLLOW)**

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager presented a report detailing the outcomes of a recent process for the recruitment of a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils.

The Committee was informed that the Members who had been appointed to the Appointments Panel had been involved in interviewing the candidates for the position. At the end of the process, the Panel had proposed that Mr James Walton should be appointed to the position. This proposal had received unanimous support from every Member of the Panel.

Members were advised that as this was a statutory officer position, there was a requirement for Council to agree to the appointment.

Unfortunately, there was not due to be a meeting of Council at either authority until the scheduled Annual Council meetings in May 2026.

Concerns were raised that delaying the appointment until this point would potentially cause considerable disruption at the authorities.

Therefore, it was proposed that, subject to the Joint Appointment Committee's endorsement of Mr Walton's nomination, his appointment should be agreed through both Councils' urgent decision processes.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the nomination and recruitment process in detail and in doing so commented on a number of points:

- The reasons why the Appointments Panel had concluded that Mr Walton would be the best candidate for the position. The Committee was informed that Mr Walton had been the most experienced candidate who had been interviewed, including prior experience of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and had stood out as the best candidate.
- The qualifications required for the position. Members were advised that Section 151 Officers needed to be qualified and registered with a professional accountancy body and Mr Walton fulfilled this brief.
- The assistance that had been provided by external recruitment consultants, Penna, which Members praised.
- The technical assessments that all of the candidates had been required to complete.
- Mr Walton's prior experience of working in District Councils, including with a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Unitary Authorities, which would assist with Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils' preparation for LGR.
- The information that had been shared with all candidates about agile working arrangements in place in Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, including the requirement for the successful candidate to attend evening meetings.
- The potential for the Joint Appointments Committee to be provided with a precis of each candidate's achievements for future senior officer recruitment processes.
- The potential for psychometric testing to be introduced for future senior officer recruitment processes.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor B. Hartnett.

RECOMMENDED each Council

- 1) **NOTE that the Joint Appointments Panel had completed a rigorous selection process to recruit a new Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer;**

- 2) **Approve the appointment of Mr James Walton as Director for Finance and Section 151 Officer (as an employee of Bromsgrove District Council). The commencement date would be as soon as possible, subject to references, medical and eligibility checks and his notice period; and**
- 3) **NOTE that the salary agreed for the Director of Finance and Section 151 was within the range approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.**

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URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

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MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee held on 14th January 2026 were submitted.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor S. Harvey and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee held on 14th January 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

The meeting closed at 5.23 pm

Chairman

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Report to the Joint Appointments Committee – Executive Director of Governance and Assurance

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council and Councillor Matt Dormer, Leader of Redditch Borough Council
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	N/A
Report Author	Job Title: John Leach - Chief Executive Email: john.leach@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 534000
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priority	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Joint Appointments Committee: -

- 1.1 Considers and endorses the proposed changes to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) structure.
- 1.2 Agrees the deletion of the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services post and creation of the Executive Director Governance and Assurance post following completion of the job evaluation exercise.
- 1.3 Determines that the Executive Director of Governance and Assurance post is the successor to the current Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services post and approves assimilation of the current postholder to the successor role, subject to completion of the Councils' organisational change processes and confirmation that the roles are sufficiently similar.
- 1.4 Recommend to Full Council at Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council that both Councils' designate the Executive Director Governance and Assurance as both Councils' Monitoring Officer.

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- 1.5 Notes that the three Executive Directors will deputise for the Chief Executive in his absence.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for changes to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) arising from a restructure exercise. The proposal is to replace the existing Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services post with a new Executive Director post (named Executive Director of Governance and Assurance) following the outcome of a job evaluation exercise.
- 2.2 The job evaluation exercise has concluded that the duties, responsibilities, accountability and strategic leadership expectations associated with the current role are properly evaluated at Executive Director level. Having reviewed the current and proposed role profiles, it is considered that the Executive Director of Governance and Assurance role represents the successor to the existing Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services role. The proposed changes therefore constitute a restructuring involving assimilation into a successor role, subject to confirmation through the Councils' organisational change procedures that the roles are sufficiently similar.
- 2.3 The proposal is intended to strengthen strategic leadership capacity, corporate governance, organisational resilience and executive-level assurance during a period of significant organisational change. This proposal is particularly in relation to the importance of the "Golden Triangle" which features the statutory roles of the Monitoring Officer alongside the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Executive. The CIPFA/SOLACE *Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers* identifies the importance of these three statutory roles working collectively to ensure effective governance, accountability and financial stewardship. It is proposed to support considerations regarding stability and assurance, as Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council transition through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), where it is important to deliver business as usual for the two Councils whilst also undergoing significant structural change.
- 2.4 The proposal reflects the increasing significance of governance, transformation and organisational change activity across both Councils and seeks to ensure at a senior level that there is sufficient capacity and assurance from a safe and legal perspective, particularly during LGR transition. This is in order to lead these agendas effectively whilst also ensuring business as usual activity/service delivery to local communities remains a key focus for the current Councils.

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- 2.5 The refocussing of the Director of Finance role onto core financial leadership responsibilities has provided an opportunity to strengthen executive leadership capacity across governance, organisational resilience and strategic transformation.

- 2.6 It is proposed that as part of the change described in this report all three Executive Directors will deputise for the Chief Executive, again providing flexibility and strength at this time of significant change. This would be confirmed to Executive Directors as part of this exercise however, current practice is to provide such cover.

- 2.7 Over recent months the Monitoring Officer has participated within SLT arrangements on a trial basis to support resilience and assurance work alongside the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) in recognition of the changing legal landscape. This has increased the visibility of governance and assurance considerations within strategic discussions and strengthened the provision of timely legal and constitutional advice to senior officers. The arrangements have operated successfully during this period and have demonstrated the practical benefits of having governance leadership represented as part of the organisation's core executive team.

- 2.8 Historically there has been a disparity within what is termed the "Golden Triangle" of statutory officers which consists of the Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive, the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer, with the Monitoring Officer reporting to the Director of Finance role. Whilst those arrangements have operated effectively, it is now proposed to strengthen the role of the Monitoring Officer, providing parity with the Director of Finance and the Executive Director of Environment and Communities including the provision for this role to report directly to the Chief Executive to provide greater strategic alignment and organisational visibility for all three statutory officer functions and support effective governance arrangements.

- 2.9 The trial referenced above has strengthened collective decision-making, enhanced the effectiveness of strategic discussions and improved the alignment between governance, financial and organisational considerations. As this was temporary under the Councils' arrangements these additional duties have been renumerated via an honorarium.

- 2.10 The job evaluation exercise has concluded that the scope, accountability and strategic responsibilities of the role are aligned to Executive Director level. The proposed Executive Director of Governance and Assurance role retains the core purpose and principal

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responsibilities currently undertaken by the Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services whilst formally recognising the increased executive leadership responsibilities that have developed over time. It is therefore considered that the proposed Executive Director role be the successor to the existing post.

- 2.11 The trial inclusion of the Assistant Director within SLT has demonstrated the value of governance leadership operating alongside the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer as part of the organisation's core executive team. Formalising these arrangements will provide greater stability, resilience and continuity and ensure that governance considerations remain integrated within strategic planning and decision-making.
- 2.12 The proposal seeks to formalise the arrangement that has already been operating successfully in practice and the implications that a job evaluation exercise has concluded that the additional duties have actually been evaluated at an Executive Director Level now need to be implemented.
- 2.13 In determining the appropriate implementation approach, consideration has been given to whether the proposed Executive Director of Governance and Assurance role constitutes a new role or a successor to the existing Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services role. It is considered that the substantial majority of the role's purpose, statutory responsibilities, service accountabilities and leadership functions remain unchanged. The principal changes relate to executive status, organisational positioning, strategic influence and reporting arrangements. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to treat the proposed role as the successor post and to implement the proposal through assimilation rather than competitive selection.
- 2.14 The post of Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services is currently designated as both Councils' Monitoring Officer. As the outcome of the evaluation determines that the role aligns with Executive Director grade which will necessitate a new title. Both Councils' will need to redesignate the Executive Director of Governance and Assurance as their Monitoring Officer.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The proposal does not alter the delivery arrangements for Legal, Democratic or Procurement Services. These functions will continue to be delivered under the leadership of the Monitoring Officer. The proposal primarily relates to the strategic positioning of the role within the Senior Leadership Team structure and the associated executive responsibilities.

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- 3.2 Subject to approval, the Chief Executive will implement the proposal in accordance with the appropriate organisational change process in accordance with the Councils' policies and procedures and any constitutional requirements to implement these changes.
- 3.3 Formal incorporation of the Monitoring Officer into SLT will:
 - 3.3.1 Strengthen governance influence within strategic discussions;
 - 3.3.2 Improve access to timely legal and constitutional advice;
 - 3.3.3 Enhance organisational resilience;
 - 3.3.4 Support effective risk management arrangements; and
 - 3.3.5 Contribute to improved corporate decision-making and assurance work.
- 3.4 As stated at section 2.8 of this report historically the Monitoring Officer function has reported through the Section 151 Officer. Whilst this arrangement has operated effectively, it does not provide the same degree of organisational visibility or direct executive relationship as exists for the other statutory officer roles. The proposed structure establishes greater parity between the three statutory officers and supports the independent exercise of statutory responsibilities.
- 3.5 The proposed structure therefore aligns more closely with national best practice and reinforces the strategic leadership contribution of all three statutory roles ensuring that all three statutory officer roles are represented at executive level and are able to contribute directly to the Councils' most significant strategic decisions.
- 3.6 The proposed redesignation of the current role to Executive Director level reflects the outcome of the job evaluation process and the strategic importance of governance, assurance and organisational leadership responsibilities attached to the post.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposal would be funded through the redesignation of the existing Assistant Director post of Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services. Whilst the Executive Director salary is higher than the current post, the net additional cost to the Councils is considered proportionate to the strategic benefits arising from enhanced governance arrangements, increased executive resilience and strengthened organisational capacity. Any costs associated with implementation will be managed within existing corporate budgets.

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- 4.2 The precise financial impact will be determined through the implementation process. However, the proposal represents a relatively modest increase in cost when considered against the importance of strengthening governance, organisational resilience, executive leadership capacity and statutory officer arrangements.
- 4.3 It is not proposed to pay an additional payment to deputise for the Chief Executive in his absence.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 each Council must designate one of its officers as Monitoring Officer.
- 5.2 The Head of Paid Service has statutory responsibility for reporting on and determining the manner in which the Council's staff structure is organised and managed. The determination of officer structures and managerial arrangements is therefore primarily an officer function.
- 5.3 However, the current post is a statutory joint officer post and is designated as the Monitoring Officer for both Councils. As a result, whilst the underlying staffing structure is a matter for the Head of Paid Service, the employment and constitutional implications arising from the proposal require consideration by the Joint Appointments Committee and both authorities' Full Councils.
- 5.4 The job evaluation exercise has concluded that the duties, responsibilities and level of accountability associated with the current post are aligned to Executive Director grade. The implementation of that outcome necessitates the redesignation of the post to a new title, namely Executive Director of Governance and Assurance.
- 5.5 The Councils have considered whether the proposed Executive Director of Governance and Assurance role constitutes a new role or the successor to the existing Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services post. It is considered that the proposed role is the successor post, given the substantial continuity of purpose, statutory responsibilities and service accountabilities. Accordingly, assimilation to the successor role is proposed, subject to completion of the Councils' organisational change procedures and confirmation of sufficient similarity between the roles.
- 5.6 As the current Monitoring Officer designation is attached to the existing post title, approval is required for the redesignation of the statutory Monitoring Officer function to the Executive Director of Governance and Assurance post following implementation of the revised structure.

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6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 As the Councils prepare for Local Government Reorganisation and continue to strengthen their governance arrangements, there is not only an opportunity but a need to review the executive leadership structure at Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. This is to ensure it remains aligned with organisational priorities, statutory responsibilities and future operating requirements particularly from a safe and legal/assurance perspective both for the new council and the outgoing local authorities.
- 6.2 The Councils are entering a period of unprecedented organisational change through Local Government Reorganisation. During such periods, strong executive leadership, resilience within the senior management structure and clear statutory officer relationships become increasingly important.
- 6.3 Local Government Reorganisation will require sustained leadership capacity and will involve complex governance, constitutional, workforce, financial and organisational considerations. Establishing a resilient executive leadership structure at this stage will help ensure that the Councils are appropriately positioned to manage this transition whilst continuing to deliver their existing priorities and statutory responsibilities.
- 6.4 The Councils' ability to successfully navigate Local Government Reorganisation will require sufficient executive-level capacity to lead organisational change whilst maintaining effective governance, corporate assurance, financial stewardship and service delivery.
- 6.5 The proposed structure strengthens resilience within the Senior Leadership Team by ensuring there is sufficient executive leadership capacity to support the scale and complexity of the changes anticipated over the coming years.
- 6.6 The redesignation to an Executive Director post provides greater organisational resilience, reduces single points of dependency within the senior leadership structure and supports continuity of leadership during a period of significant transformation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.7 The proposal directly supports the Councils' priority of maintaining an effective and well-governed organisation. Strengthening executive

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leadership and statutory officer arrangements will enhance organisational resilience, governance and corporate capacity, enabling the Councils to continue delivering high-quality services and achieving their strategic objectives during a period of significant organisational change.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.8 There are no specific climate change implications.

Community Impact

- 6.9 The proposal does not directly change the delivery of frontline services to residents. However, it is intended to strengthen the Councils' governance, organisational resilience and executive leadership capacity, helping to ensure that services continue to be delivered effectively during a period of significant organisational change.
- 6.10 Strengthening executive-level governance and assurance arrangements will support robust decision-making, effective risk management and continued compliance with statutory obligations. This will help maintain confidence in the Councils' ability to deliver services, safeguard public resources and support the needs of local communities throughout the Local Government Reorganisation transition period.
- 6.11 The proposal is therefore expected to have an indirect positive impact on residents and communities through strengthened organisational leadership, resilience and corporate governance.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.12 The proposal has been developed based on organisational requirements, governance considerations and job evaluation outcomes. It relates to the duties and responsibilities of the post rather than the characteristics of any individual postholder.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the proposal is not approved, risks include:
- 7.1.1 Reduced strategic capacity to support Local Government Reorganisation;
 - 7.1.2 Governance and assurance functions remaining insufficiently represented at Executive Director level;

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- 7.1.3 Reduced resilience and executive leadership within the Senior Leadership Team particularly during Local Government Reorganisation and other significant organisational change programmes
 - 7.1.4 Continued divergence from recognised best practice concerning statutory officer relationships; and
 - 7.1.5 Reduced organisational resilience and diminished strategic governance capacity during a period of significant organisational change.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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