

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council
2025

27th January

Statutory Officer Appointments – nominations to the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor Joe Baker, Leader of Redditch Borough Council
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Lead Officer	Becky Talbot Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Council Priorities	Sustainability
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council is asked to RESOLVE

- 1) **To note the Joint Appointments Committee has completed a rigorous selection process to recruit a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and a new Deputy Chief Executive and Section151 Officer.**
- 2) **To approve the appointment of John Leach as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks.**
- 3) **To note that the salary agreed for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is within the range approved by Redditch Borough Council’s Pay Policy as the employing authority.**
- 4) **Subject thereto, John Leach to be made available under the shared services arrangements with Bromsgrove District Council to perform such duties as are required in his capacity as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for Bromsgrove District Council.**

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- 5) Subject to agreement of resolution 2 above, John Leach be appointed as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Redditch Borough Council.
- 6) Subject to the prior approval by Bromsgrove District Council as employing authority, to approve the appointment of Robert Watson as Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, to fulfil the purposes of Section 151 of the Local Government 1972, subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks.
- 7) To note that the salary agreed for the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is within the range approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy as the employing authority.
- 8) The current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to remain in post until John Leach and Robert Watson have commenced employment with the authorities.
- 9) The current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to remain the authority's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until the new Chief Executive commences employment with the authority.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The decision to appoint a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer is reserved to full Council. This legal requirement is reflected in the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 Following a tender exercise, Gatenby Sanderson were commissioned as the external recruitment agency to assist with a national search and the recruitment process for both positions.
- 2.3 The introduction of a Joint Appointments Committee was approved by Bromsgrove District Council's Full Council on 17th July 2024 and Redditch Borough Council's Full Council on 29th July 2024.
- 2.4 A meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee took place on Wednesday 13th November 2024. During this meeting, the Committee agreed to appoint Members from both authorities to serve on a joint

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Appointments Sub-Committee. The role of the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee was to act as the recruitment panel for both positions.

2.5 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee undertook the final interviews for the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer on the 16th and 18th December 2024 respectively. The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee received professional support from the current Chief Executive, the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager and an external Recruitment Advisor from GatenbySanderson.

2.6 The members of the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee were:-

Redditch Borough Council Representatives:

Councillor Joe Baker, Leader, Redditch Borough Council

Councillor Bill Hartnett, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Redditch Borough Council

Councillor Matthew Dormer, Conservative Group Leader, Redditch Borough Council

Bromsgrove District Council Representatives:

Councillor Karen May, Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

Councillor Peter McDonald, Labour Group Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

Councillor Rob Hunter, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Bromsgrove District Council

2.7 A further meeting of the Joint Appointments Committee took place on Wednesday 8th January 2025. During this meeting, Members considered recommendations made by the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee concerning their nominations for the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer respectively.

2.8 Based on the outcomes of the recruitment process, the Joint Appointments Committee recommended that John Leach be recruited to the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service subject to satisfactory reference and eligibility checks.

2.9 John Leach is currently employed by East Lindsey District Council, on a permanent basis as Deputy Chief Executive for East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council

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(South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership). Subject to Members' agreement at both Councils, he will undertake the role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

- 2.10 As the employing authority, the Council needs to determine whether to agree to share John Leach under the shared services arrangements with Bromsgrove District Council for the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.
- 2.11 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee propose the salary to be offered for this role is £145,807 in accordance with the pay range set out in Redditch Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement, as employing authority, subject to approval by both Councils.
- 2.12 Based on the outcomes of the recruitment process, the Joint Appointments Committee is recommending Robert Watson for the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, subject to satisfactory references and eligibility checks.
- 2.13 Robert Watson is currently employed by Surrey Heath Borough Council on a permanent basis as Strategic Director, Finance, S151 and Customer Services. Subject to Members' approval at both Councils, he will undertake the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.
- 2.14 Bromsgrove District Council is the employing authority for the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.
- 2.15 The Joint Appointments Sub-Committee propose that the salary to be offered for this role is £119,590 in accordance with the pay range set out in Bromsgrove District Council's Pay Policy Statement, as the employing authority for this position, subject to approval by both Councils.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The positions of Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer are statutory officer posts. It is therefore imperative that the Council has Officers who are appointed to these positions.
- 3.2 Redditch Borough Council is the employing authority for the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. Subject to Members' approval at Council of John Leach's appointment, John will be made available by Redditch Borough Council under the shared services arrangements to perform such duties as are required by their post for Bromsgrove District Council.

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- 3.3 Bromsgrove District Council is the employing authority for the position of Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer. Subject to Members' approval at Council of Robert Watson's appointment, he will be made available by Bromsgrove District Council under the shared services arrangements to perform such duties as are required by their post for Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.4 Subject to Members' approval at both Councils of the appointment of John Leach, the current Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service will remain in post until John Leach has commenced employment with Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.5 Subject to Members' approval at both Councils of the appointment of Robert Watson, the current Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer will remain in post until Robert Watson has commenced employment with Bromsgrove District Council. This will ensure service continuity and that both Councils continue to have statutory officers in post.
- 3.6 Bromsgrove District Council's full Council meeting at which statutory officer appointments will be discussed is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 22nd January 2025. This meeting, whilst taking place before Redditch Borough Council's full council meeting on 27th January 2025 at which this subject will be considered, is due to take place after the agenda for the Redditch Council meeting will have been published. Any changes arising from the Bromsgrove Council meeting will be reported for the consideration of Redditch Councillors on 27th January 2025.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The salary costs of the new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and the new Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will be met from existing budgets and is within the scope of the relevant authority's Pay Policy.
- 4.2 It should be noted that the salary costs will be shared on a 50:50 ratio between the two authorities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is a legal requirement that the appointment of the Head of Paid Service and the Section 151 Officer, as "statutory officers", is made by full

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Council. This is set out in the relevant regulations (The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001 (as amended) Schedule I Part II) which are reproduced in the Officer Employment Rules at Part 15 of the Constitution.

- 5.2 The Council is required to nominate an officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The relevant wording states that: -
“Without prejudice to section 111 above, every local authority shall 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.”
- 5.3 Section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, further sets out that “ (1) On and after the commencement day the Common Council shall – (a) make arrangements for the proper administration of such of its financial affairs as relate to it in its capacity as a local authority, police authority, or port health authority, and (b) secure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”.
- 5.4 Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) must be a member of a specified accountancy body.
- 5.5 The legislation regarding the appointment of the Council’s Returning Officer is set out in Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, and the requirement for an Electoral Registration Officer is set out in Section 8 of the same Act.
- 5.6 The Council is required by the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to appoint an officer as the Councils Head of Paid Service.
- 5.7 There is a requirement under the Officer Employment Procedure rules, in the Council’s constitution, to ensure that the Leader and any other Executive Committee members are notified and have no objections to the offer of appointment, which must occur before an offer of appointment is made. In this instance, Executive Committee Members were contacted with regard to the proposed appointments of John Leach and Robert Watson respectively on 10th January 2025 and did not raise any objections prior to the Council meeting. The same process was followed in Bromsgrove for the same reason and similarly no objections were received.

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6. **OTHER - IMPLICATIONS**

Relevant Priorities for the Council

- 6.1 The appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and a Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer will ensure there is stability and continuity at the Council.
- 6.2 Effective financial management underpins all the Council's operations and the achievement of the authority's priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 There are no direct equalities implications.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Failure to agree appointments to the positions of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer would mean that the Council would be at risk of failing to comply with the requirement to have officers in these statutory posts should the current officers in these positions give notice.

8. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Background Papers

'Establishment of a Joint Appointments Committee' report to Bromsgrove District Council's full Council meeting held on 17th July 2024: [Council agenda - 17th July 2024](#)

'Establishment of a Joint Appointments Committee' report to Redditch Borough Council's full Council meeting held on 29th July 2024: [Council agenda - 29th July 2024](#)

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'Joint Appointments Committee' report to Bromsgrove District Council's Council meeting held on 9th October 2024: [Council agenda - 9th October 2024](#)

'Joint Appointments Committee' report to Redditch Borough Council's Council meeting held on 11th November 2024: [Council agenda - 11th November 2024](#)

Overarching Framework Agreement between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council - 21st March 2011