

Joint Appointments Committee 2025

12th November

Arrangements for the Appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils

Relevant Lead Councillors		Councillor Sharon Harvey, Leader of Redditch Borough Council and Councillor Karen May, Leader of Bromsgrove District Council
Lead Councillors Consulted		
Relevant Assistant Director		Claire Felton, Assistant Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services
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Wards Affected		All wards
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		Not applicable
Relevant Council Priority		
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Joint Appointments Committee is asked to RESOLVE to
NOTE**

- 1) the current acting Section 151 Officer support in place at
Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Councils.**

The Joint Appointments Committee is asked to

- 2) consider and identify a preferred option from the options
detailed below as the process for the appointment of a Director
of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils:**
 - (a) Option A – RESOLVE to establish a Joint Appointments
Sub-Committee for the recruitment of a Director of Finance
Section 151 Officer for the lifetime of the Councils.**
 - (i) Subject to approval of Option A, to agree
nominations to the Joint Appointments Sub-
Committee, which should consist of three**

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- Councillors from each authority including the Leaders.
- (ii) Subject to approval of Option A, to agree that the quorum for the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee should be three Members, to include at least one Member from each authority.
 - (iii) Subject to approval of Option A, to NOTE that a report detailing the recommendation from the Joint Appointments Committee will be reported back to the Joint Appointments Committee and, subject to the Committee's approval, will be recommended to the respective Councils for approval at a later date.
- (b) Option B – RESOLVE to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to recruit an interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for a period of six months, subject to Council approval of the successful candidate.
- (c) Option C – RESOLVE that subject to Council approval, to enter into a long-term arrangement with another local authority for their Section 151 Officer to be appointed as the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils for the lifetime of the authorities.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the departure of the Councils' previous Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, the authorities have temporary arrangements in place in respect of the statutory officer element of this post.
- 2.2 This report invites the Joint Appointments Committee to consider the current arrangements in place and to identify a preferred option for the appointment of a Finance Director and Section 151 Officer moving forward.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The position of Section 151 Officer is a statutory officer post for local authorities.

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- 3.2 The previous Section 151 Officer at the Council was employed by Bromsgrove District Council and made available to Redditch Borough Council under shared services arrangements to perform such duties as were required by the post at Redditch Borough Council.
- 3.3 The previous post holder departed from the organisations in October 2025.
- 3.4 To ensure compliance with statutory requirements to have a Section 151 Officer, both authorities agreed, through urgent decisions, taken on 30th October 2025 in Redditch and on 31st October 2025 in Bromsgrove, to appoint the Councils' Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services as their acting Section 151 Officer. As the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Services is employed by Redditch Borough Council, there was a need for Redditch Borough Council to agree to make her available to Bromsgrove District Council under shared services arrangements to perform such duties as were required by the post at Bromsgrove District Council.
- 3.5 There was a requirement for urgent decisions to be taken in respect of this matter because the previous Section 151 Officer left the organisations at the end of October 2025 and there were no Council meetings due to take place at either authority prior to the expiration of his contract.
- 3.6 There is a need to consider arrangements for the appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils in the long-term.
- 3.7 There are a number of options available to the Councils and the Joint Appointments Committee is invited to consider which of these options are considered to be the most appropriate for the Councils moving forward.
- 3.8 Members will note that this report deals exclusively with the appointment of a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer and that this is a departure from the post currently sitting on the staffing establishment. This report seeks to disaggregate the current post and in doing so creates a new post of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer as it is felt that this would result in a more resilient approach moving forward.

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- 3.9 Members are asked to note that this approach will result in the role of Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources needing to be considered as part of a wider Senior Leadership review.

Option A

- 3.10 In 2024/25, Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils agreed to establish a Joint Appointments Committee. The purpose of the Committee was to make recommendations about appointments to the position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, where a vacancy arose, and to recommend appointments to other statutory officer positions.
- 3.11 In 2024/25, a sub-committee of the Joint Appointments Committee, was established to take part in the recruitment process for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer positions. Recommendations arising from this Joint Appointments Sub-Committee were considered by the Joint Appointments Committee and subsequently agreed by the respective Councils in January 2025.
- 3.12 A series of interviews and assessment days took place as part of this process for both posts and external specialist recruitment consultants were commissioned to support the process. This took some time to organise and facilitate.
- 3.13 The Joint Appointments Committee could adopt a similar approach to recruiting a new Section 151 Officer for the Councils. This would take time to arrange.
- 3.14 It should be noted that interviews and assessments conducted through the work of a Joint Appointments Sub-Committee would likely coincide with the busiest time of year for budget setting at local authorities. This might deter some appropriate candidates from applying for the position.
- 3.15 Members are asked to note that, should Option A be Members' preferred option, those Members appointed to the Joint Appointments Sub-Committee, would be required to undertake appropriate training.

Option B

- 3.16 As an alternative option, the Joint Appointments Committee may wish to consider delegating authority to the Chief Executive to recruit an

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interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for a period of six months.

- 3.17 This option could involve the Chief Executive recruiting an interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for the Councils via a specialist recruitment agency. The recruitment process would potentially be shorter, enabling the Councils to secure the services of a qualified candidate in time to support the Financial Services team with the budget setting process for the next three financial years and the preparation of Council Tax resolutions for 2026/27.
- 3.18 Should Members prefer this option, it is suggested that the appointment should be made on an interim basis for an initial six month period. This would provide time for Members and Officers to assess the situation further whilst also providing the Financial Services team with additional expert support at a busy and potentially stressful time.
- 3.19 Members are asked to note that any candidate identified for appointment by the Chief Executive (and associated costings) would need to be approved by both Councils.

Option C

- 3.20 Option C would involve Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils agreeing to appoint an existing Section 151 Officer from another Council as their Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer.
- 3.21 This would involve the Councils reaching an agreement with another local authority to share their Section 151 Officer for the purposes of the proper administration of the finances of both Councils.
- 3.22 In a context of Local Government Reorganisation, Option C would ensure that an experienced Section 151 Officer could be appointed to the position at Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils for the lifetimes of the Councils.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Section 151 Officer is the Councils' Chief Finance Officer and is responsible for the proper administration of the authorities' financial affairs.
- 4.2 The post of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer will need to be formally evaluated in line with the employing Council's Job Evaluation

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Scheme (Bromsgrove District Council) and whilst it is anticipated that this will result in these proposals being financed through existing resources, Members will be aware that were option B to be approved there would likely be a supplement to acknowledge the temporary nature of the role and the market that exists in respect of short term placements.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Councils are 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.”
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 It is a legal requirement that the appointment of the Section 151 Officer, as a statutory officer, is made by full 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 in both authorities' Constitutions.
- 5.4 Section 113 the Local Government Act 1972 permits Councils to enter an agreement to place the services of their staff at the disposal of other local authorities. This legislative power would apply in respect of Bromsgrove District Council, as the current employer of the Section 151 Officer, placing the officer at the disposal of Redditch Borough Council under Options A and B. This legislative power would also apply, under Option C, as another local authority would need to agree to place their Section 151 Officer at the disposal of both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils as required by their post.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 This report has been prepared for the Joint Appointments Committee's consideration in a context of ongoing Local Government

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Reorganisation. Under the Government's proposals to reorganise local government in two-tier authority areas, both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils are due to cease to exist from May 2028 onwards. There is the potential that this situation could deter some candidates from applying for the position of Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer with the Councils under Option A.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The proposals detailed in this report are designed to support the following Council priorities:

Bromsgrove – Financial stability and sustainability.

Redditch – Financial stability, organisational stability and supported governance.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no specific climate change implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 No specific equalities and diversity implications have been identified.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that potential appropriate candidates for the position of Section 151 Officer for the Councils may be deterred from applying for the position in a context of Local Government Reorganisation.
- 7.2 As the position of Section 151 Officer is a statutory officer post, the Councils must ensure that an appropriately qualified individual is appointed at all times, including on a temporary basis where necessary. Failure to do so would place the Council at risk of reputational damage, would undermine corporate governance arrangements and would result in non-compliance with legal requirements.
- 7.3 There is a risk that, should the Council take significant time to recruit a Section 151 Officer, this could create a stressful environment for the Council's Financial Services team. As the annual budget setting period, particularly in January and February, can be quite stressful for Financial Services, this could result in an increase in the turnover of staff which could have a detrimental impact on service delivery.

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8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers

Bromsgrove District Council – Urgent Decision (taken 31st October 2025): [Bromsgrove Urgent Decision - Section 151 Officer](#)

Redditch Borough Council – Urgent Decision (taken 30th October 2025): [Redditch Urgent Decision - Section 151 Officer](#)