

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Senior Appointments Committee Council	Date:	6 March 2025 27 March 2025
Subject:	Designation of Chief Finance Officer		
Report Of:	Head of Paid Service		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To designate a Chief Finance Officer (also known as S151 Officer).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Senior Appointments Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that Alison Turner be recommended to Council to be designated as the Council's Chief Finance Officer from 8th April 2025 until further notice.
- 2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE**
- (1) That Alison Turner be designated Chief Finance Officer for the City Council in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 8th April 2025.
 - (2) That it be noted that Hadrian Walters will remain the Council's interim Chief Finance Officer until the commencement of Alison Turner's employment with the Council.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the council to make arrangements for the "proper administration of (its) financial affairs" and to "secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs" through the appointment of what is known as a Chief Finance Officer to advise the council. The Chief Finance Officer is also known as the S151 Officer and this terminology will be used throughout this report.

- 3.2 The S151 Officer is required by law to be a qualified accountant and a member of one of the professional bodies as outlined in the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The legislative framework requires that either the S151 Officer is a direct employee of the council or that the S151 Officer is an employee of another council under a formal shared service arrangement.
- 3.3 Following the departure due to ill health retirement of the previous S151 Officer, Greg Maw, on 16 November 2024, Hadrian Walters, the Financial Services Manager and Deputy S151 Officer, was appointed as the interim S151 Officer by Council on 21 November 2024.
- 3.4 Following a competitive recruitment process earlier this year, Alison Turner was appointed as Head of Finance and Resources with an anticipated start date of 8th April 2025, therefore it is recommended that Council approves her permanent appointment to the statutory S151 Officer role.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory duty to make the appointment from a suitably qualified employee. This option is recommended following a competitive recruitment process.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To meet the statutory requirements to appoint a S151 Officer for the City Council.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 If approved, Alison Turner will assume the permanent designation of S151 Officer with effect from the commencement of her employment with the Council on 8th April 2025. Hadrian Walters, the Finance Services Manager, will continue as interim S151 Officer until her arrival.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Funding for the post of Head of Finance and Resources, to which this role is attached, was identified as part of the senior management structure agreed by the Head of Paid Service in his decision dated 15 May 2023 and is part of the budgeted staffing establishment of the Council.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has a duty to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a Section 151 Officer. The Section 151 Officer must lead on the Council's financial functions and ensure that they are fit for purpose. The Section 151 Officer must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

10.2 Under Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 the Section 151 Officer must also be a member of a recognised accountancy body.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 If a S151 Officer is not in post, the Council would be in breach of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 None.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 The Local Government Act 1972 requires the person designated as S151 Officer to be employed by the Council either directly or under a formal shared services agreement with another council.

Background Documents: None