

Report to Council

19th October 2022

By Robert Laban, Head of HR&OD

DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt



**Horsham
District
Council**

Appointment of the Director of Resources & Chief Finance Officer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the appointment of the Director of Resources and to the statutory position of Chief Finance Officer, under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("s.151 Officer"), for Horsham District Council.

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- i) note the Employment Committee nomination of Dominic Bradley as the Director of Resources and s.151 Officer;
- ii) agree the appointment of Dominic Bradley to the position of Director of Resources with effect from 20 October 2022, at a starting salary of £94,270 p.a. up to £101,269 (subject to national cost of living awards);
- iii) agree the designation of Dominic Bradley as Chief Finance Officer, s.151 Officer, of Horsham District Council with effect from 20 October 2022.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) To comply with the legal requirements set out above, to appoint a person responsible for the Council's financial affairs ("s.151 Officer").
- ii) To appoint to the vacant Director of Resources position.

Background Papers: None.

Wards affected: All.

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 To ensure a timely and smooth transition to the Director of Resources and s.151 Officer role, following the appointment of the previous postholder Jane Eaton as Chief Executive, Council accepted the recommendation of the Employment Committee to appoint Dominic Bradley as the interim Director of Resources, at its meeting on 27 April 2022,
- 1.2 It was agreed that the interim post is for a period of six months, in which to start the appointment process to the permanent role, and as necessary until such date as a permanent appointment is made and the appointee commences their duties.

2 Details

- 2.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires every local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and requires one officer to be nominated to take responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
- 2.2 The s.151 Officer must be a qualified accountant belonging to one of the recognised chartered accountancy bodies.
- 2.3 The s.151 Officer has several statutory duties, including the duty to report any unlawful financial activity involving the authority (past, present, or proposed) or failure to set or keep to a balanced budget.
- 2.4 The s.151 Officer also has several statutory powers to allow this role to be carried out, such as the right to insist that the local authority makes sufficient financial provision for the cost of internal audit.
- 2.5 The Employment Committee took advice on the process to appoint a permanent Director of Resources and s.151 Officer from Solace, which set out the challenging market for roles of this kind. Their research showed that suitable candidates are scarce, with many s.151 officers approaching retirement age, and their deputies being tied in as natural successors. In addition, a wider market consequence of the pandemic has been increased appreciation of work-life balance and hybrid working, with many senior professionals re-evaluating whether the next step up the career ladder is their priority.
- 2.6 Given that state of the market, but more so having a strong internal candidate in Dominic Bradley, who has successfully acted up for a 6-month period and served as deputy s.151 Officer and Head of Finance at Horsham District Council for several years, the Employment Committee decided to offer the permanent Director of Resources and s.151 Officer roles to Dominic Bradley, subject to Council's agreement.
- 2.7 A summary of Dominic Bradley's career history is attached as Appendix 1.

3 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

3.1 Not applicable.

4 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

4.1 To advertise nationally for the position and undergo a full recruitment and selection process at a projected cost of £25,000. Alternatively, a lower cost approach to advertising on social media channels and a slimmed down selection process at a projected cost of £10,000. As set out in section 2, above, these possible actions were rejected, given the state of the market, and having a strong internal candidate.

5 Resource Consequences

5.1 There are no additional resource consequences.

6 Legal Considerations and Implications

6.1 Legal requirements have been complied with, as listed in section 2, above.

7 Risk Assessment

7.1 Not applicable.

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement issues, as this is an internal process.

9 Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

9.1 As this is an internal process of appointing the interim Director of Resources and s.151 Officer to the permanent position, there is no relevant equality legislation to be taken into account.

9.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not applicable.

10 Environmental Implications

10.1 Not applicable.

11 Other Considerations

11.1 GDPR/ Data Protection does not apply in respect of salary details, as salaries of senior staff are subject to being published under the open data, transparency and accountability agenda; there are no other considerations.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Dominic Bradley's career history:

Dominic Bradley, BA, CPFA

BA (hons) History, Durham University
Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy

EMPLOYMENT

April 2022 to date: Horsham District Council

Interim Director of Resources
Section 151 Officer

2020 to April 2022: Horsham District Council

Head of Finance and Performance
Deputy s.151 Officer

2015 - 2020: Horsham District Council

Head of Finance
Deputy s.151 Officer

2012 - 2015 Grant Thornton UK LLP

Senior Manager, Public Sector Assurance

2001 - 2012: Audit Commission

Manager, Public Sector Assurance