

	<p>Council</p> <p>20 January 2015</p>
<p>Title</p>	<p>Interim Statutory Chief Financial Officer Designation (Section 151 Officer)</p>
<p>Report of</p>	<p>Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)</p>
<p>Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>None</p>
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<p>Summary</p>
<p>Following the resignation of the Council’s Chief Operating Officer to take up alternative employment, the Council is required to designate an officer as the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151) pending the appointment to the vacancy.</p>

Recommendation

That Council designate Mr. John Hooton, the Council's Deputy Chief Operating Officer (Deputy Section 151 Officer), as the Council's Chief Financial Officer (Section 151) as required by the Local Government Act 1972 pending the appointment of a Chief Operating Officer.

Alternatives considered

The Council must designate one of its officers as the statutory Chief Financial Officer as set out in the Local Government Act 1972. The individual must meet criteria set out within the section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in order to be eligible for this role.

The Head of Paid Service has considered the appointment of an interim external candidate to the position of Chief Operating Officer and the Council's designated Section 151 Officer, but has decided that there is sufficient knowledge and confidence in the existing deputy Section 152 Officer (Deputy Chief Operating Officer) to assign the statutory duties to him.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Council is required to designate one of its' officers as the Chief Financial Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended to designate the current Deputy Section 151 Officer as the Council's Section 151 Officer pending the recruitment and appointment to the vacancy of Chief Operating Officer.
- 2.2 The Council is required by legislation to have a designated Chief Financial Officer.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 An alternative to this recommendation would be to appoint an external, interim Section 151 Officer, most likely at additional cost to the current budget.
- 3.2 The Council could seek to designate an officer from another Local Authority as a Section 151 Officer.
- 3.3 Both options have been considered and determined by the Chief Executive not to be required as the Council already has an officer in-house who is capable of fulfilling the requirements of the role in the interim period.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

Following the departure of the current officer designated as the Section 151 Officer, the interim arrangements will apply from 1 February 2015, until a permanent appointment is made.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The duties fulfil the statutory requirements for the Council's financial management and governance.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The duties fulfil the statutory requirements for the Council's financial management and governance within existing budgets.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 The interim arrangements apply to the delegation of functions to the Council's Chief Operating Officer as set out in the Article 9 (Chief Officers) and Responsibility for Functions Annex B (Scheme of Delegated Authority to Officers).

5.3.2 The Remuneration Committee will seek to advertise and appoint a permanent Chief Operating Officer, who is expected to be the Council's designated Chief Financial Officer (Section 151).

5.3.3 Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council's Chief Financial Officer must be a qualified member of a specified body as set out in Part 1, Section 6 of the Act. The designated officer has provided documentation to the Director for Human Resources to demonstrate he has met the criteria.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 The designation of a Section 151 Officer from within the existing officer structures ensures the continuity and understanding of the Council's financial plans and strategies.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 There are no considerations pertinent to this decision.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 No further consultation is required for these proposals.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 General Functions Committee, Commissioning Restructure and Associated Senior Management Position, 13 October 2014:
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MId=7800&Ver=4>