

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Designation of the Section 151 Officer
Committee: City Council
Date: 22 July 2013
Cabinet Member: Councillor Lowry
CMT Member: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author: Mark Grimley (Assistant Director HR & OD)
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Ref:

Key Decision: No

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

There is a statutory requirement on the Authority to designate three statutory officers: Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance Officer. The latter is required to be a suitably qualified individual. The Section 151 Officer, along with the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer combine to form the Council's Statutory Officer functions.

These roles are key to ensuring lawfulness, fairness, probity and general good governance that support the council in achieving its aims. It is important that they work effectively together yet maintain appropriate independence and that the roles are undertaken by adequately skilled and experienced staff supported by appropriate resources. Typical arrangements in local authorities are for the Chief Executive to be Head of Paid Service whilst the other statutory roles are occupied at either Director or, as senior management structures shrink, increasingly at Assistant Director levels.

Corporate Plan 2012 – 2015:

The Section 151 Officer is the statutory officer for the discharge of the Council's duties in relation to finances.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

The Section 151 Officer is the statutory officer for the discharge of the Council's duties in relation to finances.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Equality and Diversity:

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended to the City Council that Malcolm Coe, the Assistant Director for Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets be designated as the Council's officer responsible for the administration of its financial affairs in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from the 13 August 2013.

The reasons for these recommendations are to meet the Council's statutory responsibility to designate one of its officers to undertake these duties.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) is currently reviewing the senior management structures and will consider any longer-term arrangements as part of this review and will present her recommendations to City Council following formal consultation with those affected and the trade unions.

An interim Director will be selected in the meantime to fulfill line management responsibilities for Corporate Services pending the new senior management structure. The Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition will be involved in the selection of the interim candidate.

Published work / information:

None applicable.

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	AB 1007 13- 69	Leg	TH 0124	Mon Off	TH 0124	HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Mark Grimley, Assistant Director.													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes / No													

1.0 Report

- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, there is a statutory requirement on the Authority to designate one of its officers as a Responsible Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer). This role is required to be designated to a suitable qualified individual.
- 1.2 The Section 151 Officer, along with the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer combine to form the Council's Statutory Officer functions. These roles are key to ensuring lawfulness, fairness, probity and general good governance that support the council in achieving its aims.
- 1.3 It is important that they work effectively together yet maintain appropriate independence and that the roles are undertaken by adequately skilled and experienced staff supported by appropriate resources.
- 1.4 With the resignation of the Director for Corporate Support, the Council is required to designate one of its officers to undertake the role of Responsible Finance Officer (Section 151). As the Council's most senior, qualified finance officer, Malcolm Coe, the Assistant Director for Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets is the most logical and appropriate role for the Section 151 designation to be placed.
- 1.6 Pending the outcome of a consultation with senior officers and trade unions, the chief executive will appoint a Director-level position to cover the duties of the Director for Corporate Services. As an interim arrangement, the Leader of the Council and Leader of the opposition will be consulted over the appointment. Members will be involved in any substantive appointment in due course.