

URGENT ACTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 18 – No. 24/07

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Norman Williams
LEAD OFFICER: Len Gleed, Human Resources Manager
REPORT AUTHOR: Len Gleed, Human Resources Manager

Summary and Recommendation: This report informs the Panel of the circumstances relating to Urgent Action taken with reference to the appointment of the Council's Section 151 Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Section 151 Officer, Head of Finance & Business Development, and her deputy the Accountancy Services Manager, both left the Council's employment on 2 September 2007.

2. INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 In order to cover the period until these posts are permanently filled, the Council has secured the interim management services of an experienced senior Local Authority finance manager, who is employed under a contract between the Council and the Institute of Public Finance. The Interim Manager will act as Head of Finance & Business Development while the recruitment process for a permanent replacement runs its course.

3. SECTION 151 OFFICER ROLE

- 3.1 It is a requirement under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Council must employ an Officer with responsibility for ensuring the proper administration of its financial affairs. The person who has this responsibility must be an Officer of the Council, and therefore the interim "agency" type of arrangement referred to in paragraph 2.1 above cannot be used for the Section 151 Officer role.

4. REQUIREMENT FOR URGENT ACTION

- 4.1 In order to meet its legal obligations, the Council needed to have a directly employed Section 151 Officer in post with effect from 3 September 2007. Normally the role is attached to the post of Head of Finance & Business Development, which is a Chief Officer post, and one in relation to which the Personnel Panel plays a central role in the recruitment process.

- 4.2 In the circumstances referred to in paragraph 1.1 above, it was not possible to operate the normal recruitment process. A special direct employment contract effective from 3 September has been separately agreed with the Interim Head of Finance & Business Development, covering only the duties of the Section 151 Officer role, and incorporating a nominal salary.
- 4.3. In view of the fact that the normal recruitment processes could not be followed, the Chair of Personnel Panel agreed to the Urgent Action attached as Appendix 1.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to note the Urgent Action taken. Both senior Finance management posts will be advertised shortly, and a recruitment process with appropriate elected Member involvement will take place in early October. As soon as a permanent Head of Finance & Business Development is appointed, the temporary contract arrangement authorized by Urgent Action will terminate.

LEN GLEED

Human Resources Manager

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – URGENT ACTION REQUEST No 24/07

List of Background Documents: Local Government Act 1972

List of Consultees: None