



Report To:	Full Council
Date:	Monday 29 th September 2025
Subject:	Designation of Section 151 Officer
Purpose:	To designate a Section 151 Officer
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Dale Broughton, Leader of the Council
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
Report Author:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate
Ward(s) Affected:	N/A
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

The Council has an obligation to designate a suitably qualified Section 151 Officer.

The Council's interim Section 151 Officer, Brendan Arnold, leaves the Council at the end of his contract.

The report brings to Council the designation of a Section 151 Officer to ensure the statutory functions associated with the role are fulfilled.

As at present, the role would be undertaken on a shared basis across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

Recommendations

That Russell Stone, the Council's incoming Director of Finance, is designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 3rd November, 2025.

Reasons for Recommendations

- To ensure the Council complies with its statutory obligation of having a Section 151 Officer designated.
- The role of the Section 151 Officer is an important element in the Council's structure and processes.

Other Options Considered

- None

1. Report

- 1.1. The Council has a statutory obligation to designate three statutory officers: Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer (under sections 4 and 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 respectively) and Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance Officer (under s151 of the Local Government Act 1972). The latter is required to be a suitably 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 accountability, lawfulness, fairness, probity and general good governance that support the council in achieving its aims.
- 1.3. With the interim Section 151 Officer leaving the role at the end of his contract, Council needs to re-designate the Section 151 Officer role.
- 1.4. The Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer is contracted to South Holland District Council but shared across the three Partnership Councils via Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Report

- 2.1. The search for a Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer has been carried out in conjunction with external Executive search agency, Gatenby Sanderson.
- 2.2. The Council's Chief Executive and/or Interim Director of Finance met with three candidates and selected two to meet with the Partnership's Joint Chief Officer Employment Panel.
- 2.3. The Joint Panel, which involves Members from all three Councils, met on 29th July 2025.
- 2.4. The feedback from the Joint Panel was shared with the South Holland District Council's Chief Officer Employment Panel which also met on 29th July 2025. The Panel supported the appointment of Russell Stone as the Director of Finance.
- 2.5. Council now needs to confirm the designation of the Section 151 Officer role to Russell.
- 2.6. Russell has significant experience in Local Government, including 15 years as a Chief Financial Officer. Russell is currently Deputy Chief Executive at North Kesteven District Council with responsibility for finance as the Council's Section 151 Officer.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Appointing a Section 151 Officer is a statutory requirement placed upon the Council. It is important for a variety of reasons as outlined in this report.
- 3.2. Russell is experienced, suitably qualified, and his appointment has been supported by both the Joint Chief Officer Employment Panel and the South Holland District Council Chief Officer Employment Panel. Council is asked to approve this report to ensure a Section 151 Officer is designated upon the departure of the current interim Section 151 Officer.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

This role will continue to be shared across the Partnership.

Corporate Priorities

The role supports the delivery of all Council services/priorities.

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The appointment of a Section 151 Officer is a statutory requirement under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as Section 151 Officer shall be a member of one of the following bodies:

- a) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,
- b) the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland,
- c) the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants,
- d) the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy,
- e) the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland,
- f) the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, and
- g) any other body of accountants established in the United Kingdom and for the time being approved by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this section.

Data Protection

None

Financial

N/a – no cost from the approval of this report.

Risk Management

Not designating would present a legal risk to the Council.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Consultation took place via the Chief Officer Employment Panels.

Reputation

Not designating a Section 151 Officer would present a reputational risk to the Council.

Contracts

The employee will be on a permanent employment contract.

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None

Acronyms

None

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

Report Approval

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