

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL - 25 JULY 2023

**CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW & APPOINTMENTS
PANEL**

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (Section 151 Officer)

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Personal Development Review and Appointments Panel who met on 21 July 2023 to interview for the post of Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer).

2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	Flexible and skilled Council.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	No	The report relates to an appointment process.
SCRUTINY POWERS	N/A	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET DATE	Yes	25 July 2023
FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	This is set out in para 5.1.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Decisions concerning appointments and pay at CLT level is reserved to Council based on the recommendation of the Personal Development Review & Appointments Panel
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	N/A	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3. BACKGROUND

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 1 & 2 OF PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12(A)
TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 27 June 2023, Council considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out interim and longer-term plans arising from the departure of the Council's Corporate Director of Finance and Resource (s.151 Officer).
- 3.2 One change related to the post of Corporate Director Finance and Resource (s.151). Given the need to ensure a continued focus on the MTFs and our commercial interests it was decided to redesignate this post to Director of Finance.
- 3.3 As previously advised the post has been marketed at circa package £77,000-£90,000. This was based on job evaluation, the grade of our existing director pay band with additional headroom built in, to respond to the market. Our recruitment partner Penna have advised that the current pay market is at the top end of the advertised package due to the current recruitment climate and demand for experienced Chief Finance Officers.
- 3.4 The Council originally advertised the post of Director of Finance (s.151) on 20 April 2023 with a closing date of 19 May 2023. Penna conducted an extensive executive search across a range of suitable sectors to supplement the advertising. They identified an initial long list of 9 candidates.
- 3.5 An initial assessment including a s.151 technical interview was conducted. Following this 5 candidates were longlisted for an engagement day held on 14 June 2023 to support the shortlisting process. 2 candidates withdrew from the process. 1 due to personal reasons, the other candidate was asked for a reason but did not respond.
- 3.6 The 3 remaining candidates who attended the engagement day did not demonstrate sufficient experience to meet the requirements of the post.
- 3.7 The Council has since placed a further advert and Penna have continued to support the recruitment process by seeking alternative candidates. Penna identified a further candidate for the Council on 22 June 2023.
- 3.8 This candidate was Rebecca Maher who is currently working at Sandwell Council. Rebecca is CIPFA qualified, employed as an Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy s.151 Officer) and has previously been an Acting Director of Finance/s.151 Officer.
- 3.9 As part of due diligence a technical s.151 interview was conducted by Mr Nathan Elvery who has senior local government experience and is a former Chief Executive/Corporate Director and s.151 professional, supported by a shortlisting

interview from Corporate Leadership Team. Additionally, positive employment references have been obtained.

- 3.10 Personal Development Review & Appointments Panel conducted a thorough assessment at a formal interview on 21 July 2023 and were completely satisfied that Rebecca Maher has substantial experience to undertake the role of Director of Finance (s.151) and will be an excellent addition to Corporate Leadership Team. As such the Panel recommend that Council confirm her appointment.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All financial implications arising from this report can be met within existing salary budgets.
- 4.2 Members should be advised that due to market conditions there will be a need to ensure that our Corporate Director salaries are reviewed to ensure there is headroom between this grade and their salary levels. Full Council approved a 2 yearly market review of senior pay (officers on JNC Conditions) on 14 September 2021. An exercise commenced earlier this year to assess the market pay of senior manager posts in comparable size councils. This report is imminent and will shortly be progressed to Council following consideration by the Personal Development Review and Appointments Panel. Budgetary provision accounted for any possible financial implications arising from this in the MTFS agreed by Members in February 2023.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 NA.

6. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the Constitution the appointment of the Council's s.151 Officer requires agreement by Council following a recommendation of the Personal Development Review and Appointments Panel.
- 6.2 The Council's Pay Policy Statement has the key principle to be 'fair, transparent and affordable maintaining rate of pay that attracts and retains talent'. The proposal is in accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement but a minor amendment would be required in respect of the list of posts under Section 14 – Senior Pay, to recognise the designation of the post of Director of Finance and the salary.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

7.1 N/A.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Candidate CV

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 That Council approve the appointment of Rebecca Maher to the post of Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) on a spot salary of circa £90,500.
- 11.2 That Council authorises the Assistant Director Organisation and People Development to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Pay Policy Statement.

Report prepared by Councillor Roger Lees, Leader, and Chairman of the Personal Development Review & Appointments Panel