

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: MSDC COUNCIL BDC COUNCIL	REPORT NUMBER: MC/21/33
FROM: Chief Executive	DATE OF MEETINGS: 21 March 2022 22 March 2022

DESIGNATION OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER ROLE

1. Purpose of Report

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 places a legal requirement on the Council to have a Section 151 Officer in place. The purpose of this report is to approve the designation of the Section 151 Officer for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That, having been appointed as the Assistant Director for Resources, Melissa Evans be designated to the statutory role of 'Section 151 Officer' for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None directly arising from this report.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
It is a statutory duty to appoint a Section 151 Officer to undertake the role as set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation.	Low	High	Appoint a Section 151 Officer

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Key Information

- 7.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint one of their Officers to have responsibility for the administration of those affairs. It places a legal requirement on the Council to have a Section 151 Officer in place.
- 7.2 Formal recruitment to the post began in December 2021, following the announcement that the current S151 Officer, Katherine Steel, was to retire from her post and the Councils on 30th April 2022. It was unanimously agreed to appoint Melissa Evans into this role following a robust recruitment process, which involved the following stages.

Stage One

A technical interview with Rob Bridge (Chief Executive of North Northamptonshire Council and previously a 151 Officer) and a separate one-to-one interview with Kathy Nixon, Strategic Director.

Stage Two

A two day process where candidates went through:

- a stakeholder panel with Directors of Finance from partner agencies and also the chair of two of our company boards;
- a Member panel;
- a panel with the Assistant Directors; and
- a panel with Arthur Charvonja and Kathy Nixon.

Ben Cox, Director of Public Sector Executive Recruitment at Penna was present for all panels throughout the two days.

- 7.3 Melissa Evans has 21 years' experience in local government finance, having held the position of Deputy 151 Officer at Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils since 2015. Prior to that she was the Deputy Chief Finance Officer at St. Edmundsbury Borough Council & Forest Heath District Council.
- 7.4 Melissa Evans is appropriately qualified to discharge the statutory functions of the Section 151 Officer.
- 7.5 The designation as Section 151 Officer requires the formal agreement of Council.

8. Appendices

None.

9. Background Documents

None.

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