



FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Subject	APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND SECTION 151 OFFICER
Cabinet Member	Councillor Caroline Topping, Leader of the Council
Report Author(s)	Chris Bally Chief Executive chris.bally@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01502 523210

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	N/A
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

Local authorities are required to have in place certain statutory officers, one of which is the Section 151 Officer, known in East Suffolk as the Chief Financial Officer, who undertakes a range of key financial responsibilities.

In March 2023, the former postholder, Brian Mew, retired and Full Council agreed to appoint Mrs Lorraine Rogers as the Acting Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer pursuant to a full recruitment process being undertaken once the financial year end processes had been completed. Mrs Lorraine Rogers was formerly the Deputy Section 151 Officer.

The recruitment process is now complete and this report seeks Full Council's approval to appoint Mrs Lorraine Rogers as the Council's permanent Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

Options:

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. The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is one of three statutory roles which the Council must have in place, the others being the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer. Since the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is a statutory role, the Council has no option but to ensure the role is filled.

Recommendation/s:

That Full Council approve the appointment of Mrs Lorraine Rogers as its Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer and the officer responsible for the administration of the Council's finances under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council which includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, the administration of its financial affairs, contributing to the corporate management of the Council and the provision of financial information and advice. The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is therefore integral to the day-to-day operation of the Council as well as being a statutory officer.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The Council's Constitution refers to the role and remit of the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

Environmental:

No impact.

Equalities and Diversity:

The postholder ensures that the Council remains financially viable and has a fully sustainable funding position in order to be able to provide a full and effective range of services to all communities across the district.

Financial:

The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Council meets legislative requirements and adheres to the Finance Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution

Human Resources:

No impact.

ICT:

No impact.

Legal:

The Council is required to appoint a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Risk:

Failure to appoint a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer would be contrary to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Constitution

External Consultees: None

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
<p>The postholder is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council which includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, the administration of financial affairs, contributing to the corporate management of the Council and the provision of financial information and advice. In essence, the postholder is responsible for ensuring the Council remains financially viable and able to deliver effective services to all of its communities across the district.</p>			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer role is a statutory requirement in accordance with the legislation referred to above.
2 Current position	
2.1	Mrs Lorraine Rogers was appointed by Full Council as Acting Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer from 1 April 2023 following retirement of the then postholder on 31 March 2023.
2.2	Full Council approved this temporary position pending a full recruitment process once the financial year end procedures had been completed.
3 How to address current situation	
3.1	The formal recruitment process began in September 2023 and interviews took place on 13 October 2023 involving a cross party panel of Members. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an Appointments Committee was convened on 23 October 2023.
4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	The appointment of a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is a statutory requirement and the proposal contained within this report will ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation.
4.2	Mrs Lorraine Rogers is an officer with significant local government experience. She was the Council's Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for a number of years prior to taking on the full role in April 2023. She has worked for East Suffolk Council and its predecessor councils for 25 years and is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None