



## Council

Item  
**4**

23 March 2023

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Richard Block</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Designation of Interim Section 151 Officer</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests Full Council to agree to designate Andrew Small as the Council's Interim Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) in advance of future permanent arrangements being agreed.

### 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 That the Council designates Andrew Small as Interim Section 151 Officer, as required by legislation, with effect from 1 April 2023.

### 3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 The Council is obliged by the Local Government Act 1972 to designate an officer as the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer). This is a statutory requirement and comprises one of the three statutory officer posts which every local authority is required to appoint (the others being the Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer).

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The designation of this post is a non-executive function and as such it is the Council's responsibility to designate an officer.
- 4.2 The section 151 Officer (chief finance officer) is the officer responsible for ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 4.3 The previous section 151 Officer Paul Cook, is due to retire and will leave the Council's employment on 31 March 2023. This means the Council needs to appoint a replacement.
- 4.4 As reported to Cabinet in March, North Essex Councils have agreed to work closely together and explore opportunities to share services where appropriate. This has the benefit of providing greater efficiency and to fill professional roles that can be difficult to recruit to.
- 4.5 This Council has been developing a closer working relationship to consider shared services with Braintree District Council and Epping Forest District Council. This has resulted in this Council and Epping recently appointing a shared ICT and Transformation Service Director.
- 4.6 This relationship has allowed consideration of the vacancy created by our current Section 151 officer retiring in that Epping have an very experienced and high calibre Strategic Director and Section 151 officer, Andrew Small. Epping have agreed that Andrew could be shared to also perform the role of S151 officer for this Council. If appointed, Andrew Small will also be supported by his deputy S151 officer at Epping and

the existing finance management team from this Council.

4.7 This arrangement will facilitate the sharing of best practice across both Councils as well as providing Colchester with enhanced strategic finance capacity which was a recommendation of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge. It will also allow further opportunities for shared services to be explored as Andrew will have a view across both organisations.

4.8 If Andrew Small is appointed, the arrangement will initially be on an interim basis for 6 months to allow it to be trialled for both Councils.

## **5. Standard References**

5.1 There are no standard references.