South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Cyd-bwyllgor corfforaethol De-Dwyrain Cymru

Report for:	ACTION
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO

For Consideration By	South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
Report Title	Appointments Sub-Committee: Interim Appointment – Strategic Director Resources and Section 151 officer
Report of	Kellie Beirne, Chief Executive Officer
Contact Details	Kellie.beirne@cardiffcapitalregion.gov.uk
Date to be Considered	16 March 2026
Implementation Date	Immediate
Affected Council Areas	All
Keywords / Index	Staffing. Resourcing. Statutory Officers.

Report Summary

1. The report sets out the interim arrangements for the Strategic Director of Resources and statutory S151 Officer - as considered by Appointments Sub-Committee on 23 February 2026.

2. The report also sets out arrangements for the vacant role of Deputy Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal Services.

Recommendations

SEWCJC is asked to:

- Approve the appointment of James Howse for an interim contract to undertake the role of Director of Resources and statutory S151 Officer role, whilst recruitment for the permanent post is undertaken.
- Note that the Director of Legal and Governance, in line with the SEWCJC Constitution has designated Jill Morgan, currently Governance Lawyer, as the interim Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Reasons for Recommendations and Options Considered

Background – Resources

3. The position of Strategic Director Resources is currently vacant following the departure of the former postholder, Liam Hull on 22 February. Recruiting for statutory officer posts in the UK local government sector is extremely challenging with 94% of councils reporting recruitment and retention difficulties. CCR has been working with Gatenby Sanderson on permanent recruitment to the post, which it is strongly advised is advertised with the Market Forces supplement approved by CJC in 2025. The selection process is underway with shortlisting due to take place week of 2 March 2026.

4. In the interim, following an extensive search process via agencies, requests made to Councils for resources/sharing of s.151 posts/secondments – all of which has not led to an interim solution – a suitably qualified interim candidate has been sourced via Gatenby. The candidate, James Howse is a suitably qualified and highly experienced with a strong track as a senior finance (including holding s151 role) and programme director specialist in local authority, combined authority and housing association sectors.

5. SEWCJC is now asked to endorse the appointment for an interim period and until a new officer is appointed to the role.

Legal and Governance

6. Following appointment to the role of Director of Legal and Governance, Jill Byron has designated Governance Lawyer, Jill Morgan as Head of Legal/Deputy Monitoring Officer. This will help provide resilience in a very small team ahead of a campaign to recruit to this important area of the organisation – especially considering the increased legal and democratic services support required around new programmes such as the Investment Zone and the Local Innovation Partnership Fund.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. The process has been conducted with regard to Corporate People & Culture and Finance policies and procedures and actions and will be reported to CJC on 16h March 2026. This is in line with the CJC's Constitution which sets out the policy and decision-making process for such appointments.

Comments of the Director of Resources and s.151 Officer

8. The cost of the permanent post of the Strategic Director of Resources is included in the approved 2026/27 budget.

9. Noting that in light of the subject matter, the above comment has been reviewed by the Director of Legal and Governance with support from the Finance Business Partner.

Comments of the Director of Legal and Governance

Appointment of Interim Director of Resources and s151 Officer:

10. Under section 151 of the Local Government and Finance Act (as amended by the Corporate Joint Committees (General) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021) the CJC has a duty to appoint an officer who is responsible for the proper administration of their financial affairs. Part VIII of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) makes further provision in respect of the duties of the section 151 officer and also requires them to be a qualified accountant.

11. The section 151 Officer is a statutory Chief Officer post and, under the CJC's Employment procedure Rules and Scheme of Delegation, their appointment is a matter reserved to the CJC following the recommendation of the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Appointment of Deputy Monitoring Officer:

12. The designation of a Deputy Monitoring officer is a personal appointment of the Monitoring Officer.

Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

13. There are no implications directly associated with this report, save to say, the process is undertaken in line with objectives of CCR's People & Culture policies and procedure.

Sustainability and Climate Considerations

14. There are no implications directly associated with this report.

Risk Management

15. The appointment of an able and committed Senior Executive Team is required to:

- Ensure the requisite senior leadership capacity is in place to lead, develop and deliver on the CJC agenda.
- Ensure capacity is in place in respect of statutory officer positions: Chief Executive Officer, s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer – the 'golden triangle'.
- Safeguard the reputational interests of CCR by promoting high standards and ensuring openness, probity and accountability.

Consultation

16. The Senior Executive Team structure for CCR was approved at the meeting of the SEWCJC on 4 December 2024.

Welsh Language Implications

17. Due regard has been had to Welsh Language implications.

Well-being of Future Generations

18. In developing the Recommendations of this report, regard has been had to the well-being duty arising under the to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

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16 March 2026