

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 25th September 2025

CONTACT OFFICER: Bal Toor – Human Resources Director

WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report seeks the Council to note the decision by Commissioners to appoint to the position of Interim Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

1. Note the decision by Commissioners, following the appropriate recruitment processes having been undertaken, to appoint Mr Ian O'Donnell as the Council's Interim Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer.
2. Approve the update of the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 to reflect the pay arrangements of the new interim officer.

Reason: The Council has a statutory obligation to appoint a Section 151 Officer, and the recommendation supports the Recovery Plan by providing further support to promoting effective financial management and to provide strong leadership.

Commissioner Review

Commissioners have reviewed the report and are supportive of the recommendations.

2 Report

2.1 Due to the resignation of the previous full-time permanent Executive Director of Corporate Resource (s151) in September 2025 and to ensure continuity in post of a S151, the Commissioners appointed the current Deputy S151 officer, Christopher Holme, as the interim S151 Officer from 3rd September to 10th September. Following this Mr Ian O'Donnell has commenced employment in this interim post. The post holder is a member of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, contributing to the collective leadership of the council. The role will ensure that the Council has robust financial, risk management and audit arrangements in place and can provide assurance that these areas are delivering at the pace required. This

role provides executive leadership of the Corporate Resources directorate, to include finance, audit, procurement, HR and Digital Data and Technology (DDAT) function.

- 2.2 The Secretary of State Directions of 20 November 2024 state that the Government-appointed Commissioners at the Council shall exercise the function of appointing and dismissing of persons to positions the holders of which are to be designated as statutory officers and statutory officer is defined as including the s151. The function includes designating the person as a statutory officer and determining their terms and conditions of employment. However, whilst the decision sits with the Commissioners, the post holder has a key responsibility to the whole Council and will work closely with elected members, including members from the main political groups. For this reason, the Appointments Committee was convened to interview suitable candidates. The commissioners led a selection process and identified an experienced candidate for interview.
- 2.3 Ian O'Donnell is an experienced resources director and s151 whose career since 2019 has focused on supporting Councils in intervention and experiencing financial difficulties, including Croydon, Liverpool and Birmingham. He has most recently finished an assignment at Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. Recruiting an experienced interim provides the opportunity for the Council to plan a comprehensive recruitment process to fill the role on a permanent basis and will also provide immediate leadership support to the two new permanent finance directors due to start in September.
- 2.4 The appointment was made following an interview and recommendation by the Appointments Committee. All members of the committee agreed that Mr. O'Donnell was a suitable candidate and would bring extensive experience to assist the Council's improvement and recovery.
- 2.5 There were no objections made by any member of the Cabinet and, therefore, the offer of appointment has been made, and it is now being reported to Council in accordance with the Council's Chief Officer Procedure Rules.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 The post holder will undertake the role of Executive Director of Corporate Resources and the statutory function of the Section 151 Officer. This is a statutory appointment and is contained within the Council's senior management structure. The salary arrangements of this interim post are £1350.18 a day (inclusive of agency margin).

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 An offer of employment as a chief officer shall only be made where no objection from any member of the Cabinet has been received and when commissioners have approved this appointment.
- 3.2.2 The Council's Pay Policy Statement contains details of chief officer salaries and will be updated to reflect the daily rate of the new interim to ensure openness and transparency.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The risks of not making the necessary improvements to the Council are considerable. A key risk is not being able to make the necessary improvements in relation to leadership and governance. The intended post holder will play a key role in addressing these risks.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 Not applicable

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.5.2 Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce that reflects the wider community of Slough will help to meet this duty and ensure that proposals, decisions and service delivery is led and managed by staff with a diverse approach and background. The post holder will work as part of the wider corporate leadership team to fulfil this aim.

3.6 Workforce implications

3.6.1 The recommendation is to recruit to a key statutory post to assist with the Council's recovery and improvement plans.

4. Appendices

Commissioner letter to appoint

5. Background Papers

None