

# **GUILDFORD & WAVERLEY JOINT SENIOR STAFF COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 12 APRIL 2024**

### Present:

Councillor Julia McShane, Leader, Guildford Borough Council: co-chair (in the chair)  
Councillor Paul Follows, Leader, Waverley Borough Council: co-chair  
Councillor Bilal Akhtar, Guildford Borough Council  
Councillor Peter Martin, Waverley Borough Council  
Councillor Liz Townsend, Waverley Borough Council  
Councillor Fiona White, Guildford Borough Council

### **Action By**

#### **14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Philip Brooker and Tony Fairclough, for whom Councillors Bilal Akhtar and Liz Townsend substituted.

#### **15. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

#### **16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Joint Senior Staff Committee (JSSC)

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 4 on the agenda on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified in Paragraph 1 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act namely: 'Information relating to any individual'.

- (2) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**17. APPOINTMENT OF JOINT STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

The JSSC noted that Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 required local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Financial Officer, to have responsibility for those arrangements. Due to the changes to the Corporate Management Board structure and the advertising of the permanent role of Joint Strategic Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer a permanent appointment was required to ensure that both Councils were able to meet their statutory requirements.

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The role of permanent Joint Strategic Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer had been advertised internally and externally across the recruitment platforms at Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council from Monday 18 March to Monday 25 March 2024. The external advertising at Waverley included the role being placed on Jobs Go Public, an external recruitment site specialising in public sector recruitment. Jobs Go Public was also the chosen platform for the Local Government Association. The role had been advertised on their main sites and across their social media platforms as well as on the LG Jobs (Local Government site).

The statistics on the Jobs Go Public site had indicated that the role received 464 views across all platforms and 118 “apply” clicks, which meant potential candidates also then clicked through to find out further information on the role. The JSSC noted, however, that only one application had been received, which was from the current interim S151 Officer, Richard Bates. It was also noted that Mr Bates had been in the role of interim Executive Head of Finance/ S151 Officer since 17 July 2023, and, latterly, the role of Interim Joint Strategic Director of Finance.

The JSSC was asked to conduct an interview of Richard Bates for the permanent role of Joint Strategic Director of

Finance/Section 151 Officer and, where appropriate, to recommend an appointment for confirmation at the full meetings of both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils to be held respectively on 16 and 23 April 2024. Any formal offer of appointment was subject to no material or well-founded objection being made by either of the two Council Leaders on behalf of their respective Executives in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.

Following the interview, the JSSC unanimously

RESOLVED: To recommend to both Councils that Richard Bates be appointed to the permanent role of Joint Strategic Director of Finance / Section 151 Officer, which will be made subject to no material or well-founded objection being made by either of the two Council Leaders on behalf of their respective Executives.

Reasons:

- Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 requires that local authorities have in place arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.
- Richard Bates is a qualified Accountant and experienced local authority Chief Financial Officer. He has held the S151 Officer role at Dorset County Council and interim S151 Officer at Mendip District Council.
- Richard Bates has been carrying out the responsibilities of the role of interim Executive Head of Finance/S151 Officer at both authorities since 17 July 2023 and, latterly, the role of Interim Joint Strategic Director of Finance.