

**APPOINTMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that the Council appoints a Chief Finance Officer (Strategic Director for Finance). The Chief Finance Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the proper administration of the Council's finances.

The Council's Appointments Panel met on 2 February 2024 to complete a final interview and unanimously agreed to recommend to Council the appointment of Mr Stephen Fitzgerald to the post of Strategic Director for Finance and Section 151 Officer.

**Recommendations**

The Council is requested to:

**RESOLVE That** Mr Stephen Fitzgerald is appointed as Strategic Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer).

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Reporting Person:</b>	Julie Fisher, Chief Executive Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Rachel Basham, Strategic Lead – Improvement and Recovery Email: rachel.basham@woking.gov.uk
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
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# **Appointment of Strategic Director For Finance and Section 151 Officer – Supplementary Report**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that the Council appoints a Chief Finance Officer (Strategic Director for Finance). The Chief Finance Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the proper administration of the Council's finances.

## **2.0 Member Appointment Panel**

2.1 The appointment of all statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers takes place at Council. Delegated responsibility for the interview of candidate(s) for such positions is delegated to the cross-party Member Appointments Panel.

2.2 The Member Appointments Panel met on Friday 2 February at 10am. The following Members were present: Councillors Tahir Aziz (as an Observer), Ann-Marie Barker, Kevin Davis, Will Forster and Dale Roberts.

2.3 The meeting was also attended by: Julie Fisher (Chief Executive, Woking Borough Council), Richard Carr (Incoming Manager Director Commissioner) and Frazer Thouard (Gatenby Sanderson).

## **3.0 Recommendation of the Panel**

3.1 Following an interview, the Panel Members unanimously resolved to recommend to Council that Mr Stephen Fitzgerald is appointed to the position of Strategic Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer). A copy of the minutes of the meeting is attached for information.

3.2 Stephen Fitzgerald is a leadership, management, strategy, and finance expert with diverse senior experience across local and central government. Mr Fitzgerald is currently an interim executive, with a career which covers finance, policy, organisational transformation, resource attraction, budget management and establishing strategic partnerships across sector. As well as Strategic Director and S151 appointments in local government, Stephen has also held positions at the National Audit Office and central Government. Stephen Fitzgerald is also a Finance Improvement and Sustainability Advisor for the Local Government Association, providing strategic advice and support on financial sustainability and resilience to several local authorities.

3.3 Stephen's qualifications include:

- Master of Business Administration, University of Westminster (MBA)
- Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA)
- Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Associate Membership of the Chartered Institute of Governance of the UK and Ireland (ACG)
- Associate Membership of the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV)
- Bachelor of Arts Joint Honours Degree: Classical Civilizations and History (BA Hons)

3.4 The Panel Members were satisfied that Mr Fitzgerald had the right experience, knowledge and skills to fulfil the role of Strategic Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer).

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### 4.0 Implications

#### Finance and Risk

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement of the Council to appoint a S151 Officer (Local Government Act 1972).

#### Equalities and Human Resources

- 4.2 The recruitment process has been undertaken in line with equalities best practice.

#### Legal

- 4.3 As per 4.1.

REPORT ENDS