

Report subject	Extension of Secondment – Interim Chief of Finance & Section 151 Officer
Meeting date	12 May 2026
Status	Public Report (Appendix 1, Exempt)
Executive summary	<p>This report provides the Council with an update on the external recruitment process for the Chief of Finance & Section 151 Officer role and confirms that Matthew Filmer's secondment as Interim Chief of Finance & Section 151 Officer will be extended for a further 15 months.</p> <p>Following a full, open and competitive recruitment exercise, the Member Appointments Panel concluded unanimously that no permanent appointment should be made at this time and agreed that Mr Filmer should continue in the interim role until July 2027. This decision reflects the importance of maintaining continuity, organisational stability and continued support for Mr Filmer's development. Mr Filmer has confirmed his acceptance of the extension.</p>
Reason for Update	Constitution - Appointment of Head of the Paid Service, Chief Officers (Tier 2 Appointments), Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Mike Cox, Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance
Chief Executive	Aidan Dunn
Report Authors	<p>Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive</p> <p>Sarah Deane, Director of People and Culture</p> <p>Jon Matthews, Head of Resourcing, Employee Relations & Change</p> <p>Isabel Hall, Senior Talent Acquisition Advisor</p>
Wards	All
Classification	Update

Background

- 1.1 The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is a statutory role under the Local Government Act 1972, carrying responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.2 In February 2026, following an internal recruitment process, the Council approved the appointment of Matthew Filmer to the role of Interim Chief of Finance & Section 151 Officer for a period of 6 months, to provide continuity and stability while a permanent appointment process was undertaken.
- 1.3 This report provides Council with an update on the outcome of the permanent recruitment exercise and seeks approval to extend the interim arrangement, following an unsuccessful appointment process.

2 Recruitment Process

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the requirements for the appointment of senior and statutory officers, including Chief Officers and the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Employment and Procedure Rules – Part 4E of the Constitution, such appointments must be subject to a recruitment process arranged by the Director of People and Culture, conducted in a manner likely to attract suitably qualified candidates, and involving appropriate Member oversight. The Constitution further provides that the appointment (or extension of appointment) of the Section 151 Officer is a matter reserved to Full Council.
- 2.3 In line with these requirements, the recruitment process for the permanent Chief Finance Officer role was undertaken as a full, open and competitive external campaign, including:
 - National advertising through the Municipal Journal
 - Advertising via LinkedIn
 - An active executive search, delivered in partnership with Penna, the Council's appointed executive recruitment specialists
- 2.4 The selection panel comprised of the following:
 - Cllr Millie Earl (Leader of the Council),
 - Cllr Mike Cox (Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance)
 - Cllr John Beesley (Leader of the Conservative Group)
 - Cllr Patrick Canavan (Leader of the Labour Group)
 - Cllr Dr Felicity Rice (Poole People Group)
 - Aidan Dunn, (Chief Executive),
 - Sarah Deane, (Director of People and Culture)
 - Bernadette MacDonald-Raggett (Independent Observer)
- 2.5 As part of the search activity, approximately 100 potential candidates were identified and approached directly by Penna. Following initial engagement, candidates progressed through longlisting, external technical assessment, and shortlisting stages.

- 2.6 Two external candidates were shortlisted and invited to attend a formal recruitment and selection assessment centre held on 15 April 2026, which included member-led interviews and assessment in line with the Council's constitutional requirements for statutory officer appointments.
- 2.7 Following completion of the selection process, the Member Appointments Panel concluded that no appointment should be made on this occasion.
- 2.8 Mr Filmer has 17 years' service with BCP Council and its predecessor authorities and, during his time in the interim role, has demonstrated strong capability, effective leadership and sound professional judgement in leading the Finance function and discharging the Council's statutory financial responsibilities. The recruitment process did not identify a candidate who better met the requirements of the role at this stage, and Members recognised the importance of maintaining continuity, organisational stability and continued support for Mr Filmer's development.
- 2.9 The appointment panel therefore unanimously agreed that Matthew Filmer should be asked to continue in the interim position, with the role to be reviewed following the next Council elections.

This approach ensures:

- Continued compliance with statutory Section 151 requirements
- Stability within the Council's financial leadership during a period of ongoing financial and organisational challenge
- Sufficient time to consider future options for securing permanent arrangements at an appropriate time

- 2.10 Mr Filmer has confirmed his acceptance of the proposed extension.

3 Summary of financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report, as the role is within the current establishment budget.

4 Summary of legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5 Summary of sustainability impact

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

6 Summary of public health implications

There are no public health implications arising from this report.

7 Summary of equality implications

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Candidate Summary – Matthew Filmer