

BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

Cabinet - 14 September 2017

Report of the: Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report seeks approval for a change to the list of officers authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.

This report supports the Key Aim of efficient management of the Council's resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. John Scholey

Contact Officer Roy Parsons, Principal Accountant, Ext. 7204

Recommendations to Cabinet:

- a) That Mr Graham Grove, former Principal Legal Executive, no longer be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council in relation to the Chief Executive's Imprest Account;
- b) That Miss Helen Martin, Head of Finance, no longer be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council as from the date of her retirement; and
- c) That pursuant to Financial Procedure Rules 4.73 and 4.74, Miss Veronica Wilson, Principal Accountant, be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.

Reason for recommendations: To bring up to date the list of authorised signatories for the Council's bank accounts.

Background and Introduction

- 1 The Council operates an imprest account for use by the Legal Section to defray small but urgent items of expenditure. Typically, those items might be for Land Registry searches or legal fees where a cheque has to be deposited with an application.

- 2 This account operates independently of the Council's main bank accounts. It is funded up to a maximum of £700 at any one time. The signatories to it are members of the Legal Section.
- 3 With regard to the remainder of the Council's bank accounts, four officers plus the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer are authorised signatories. The retirement of one of those officers means that a replacement is required.
- 4 It should be noted that the authority of Mr Grove to sign cheques etc. was cancelled with the bank immediately upon his departure. Recommendation a) merely formalises this action.

Changes Required

- 5 The Council's Financial Procedure Rules require Cabinet approval for officers other than the Chief Executive or Section 151/Chief Finance Officer to be able to sign cheques or sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council.
- 6 Some changes in personnel mean that such approval is now being sought.

Key Implications

Financial

- 7 There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

- 8 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including the operation of banking facilities.
- 9 For day to day practical reasons, officers need to be authorised to sign cheques and sanction banking instruments on behalf of the Council. Failure to have authorised signatories in place would severely restrict the Council in the way in which it could operate bank accounts and deal with its financial needs.
- 10 Protection is in place by:
 - (i) limiting the balance held in the Chief Executive's Imprest Account to a maximum of £700 at any one time and requiring dual signatories on amounts over this sum; and
 - (ii) requiring dual signatories on the other bank accounts for items over £10,000 (£5,000 for housing benefit and local tax payments).

Equality Assessment

- 11 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

- 12 Members are being asked to update the list of authorised signatories to the Council's bank accounts.

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Constitution of Sevenoaks District Council,
Appendix D - Financial Procedure Rules:-
[Document 21 - Appendix D - Financial Procedure Rules](#)

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer