

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	RES/07/23

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	Corporate Resources Committee
Date:	22 February 2023
Report Title:	Banking and Related Financial Transactions – Authorised Signatories
Report By:	Head of Corporate Finance – Resources and Finance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 To update the approved list of officers appointed to authorise banking and related financial transactions on behalf of the Council.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Approve the deletion of Margaret Grigor, Finance Manager Corporate Budgeting, Treasury & Taxation from the list of authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions with immediate effect.
- Approve the deletion of Edward Foster, Head of Corporate Finance from the list of authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions with effect from 3 March 2023.
- Approve the addition of Brian Porter, Head of Resources and Sheila McKandie, Head of Revenues and Customer Services to the authorised signatories list with immediate effect.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – amendment to Financial Regulations.
- 3.2 Risk- Failure to have a sufficient number of staff able to support the Council's day-to-day banking activities may impact on the ability to effectively conduct business.
- 3.3 There are no Legal, Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural), Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Risk or Gaelic implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Background

4.1 The Council's banking arrangements are specified in the Council's Financial Regulations as follows:

Regulation 2.2.1 states: "These Financial Regulations detail the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer who is responsible for the proper financial administration of the Council's affairs, and acts as financial adviser to the Council, and to such other bodies, trusts and organisations, as the Council shall approve. This is a statutory role as set out in Section 95 Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The Chief Financial Officer also has statutory responsibility under Section 5 of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulation 2014 for the preparation of the annual accounts."

Regulation 2.2.2 states: "The role of the Chief Financial Officer complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government along with the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code). The Statement requires that the Chief Financial Officer: 5

- is a key member of the Leadership Team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest;
- must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the organisation's financial strategy;
- must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively."

Regulation 2.2.3 states: "Any reference in these Regulations to the Chief Financial Officer includes those specifically authorised by them to undertake the various functions concerned."

Regulation 11.1 states: " All arrangements with the Council's bankers will be made by the Chief Financial Officer".

Regulation 11.6 states: "The Chief Financial Officer will make all necessary arrangements through the use of online banking, to enable appropriate transactions to be processed through the Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS) and the Clearing House Automated 15 Payments System (CHAPS). In order to operate online banking, the designated signatories and Officers of Accountant grade and above as delegated by the Chief Financial Officer and approved by Resources Committee shall authorise all transactions and shall be responsible for approving the limits, permissions and levels of authority granted to other system users".

5. Formal Changes

5.1 The following staff should be removed from the authorised signatories list:

- Margaret Grigor, Finance Manager Corporate Budgeting, Taxation & Treasury ceased employment with the Council on 7 November 2022
- Edward Foster, Head of Corporate Finance will cease employment with the Council on 3 March 2023 with his removal from the authorised signatories list to be effective from that date

- 5.2 The following staff should be added to the authorised signatories list with immediate effect:
- Brian Porter, Head of Resources
 - Sheila McKandie, Head of Revenue and Customer Services
- 5.3 If approval is given, the Council's authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions will be as follows:
- Allan Gunn – Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Place
Sheila McKandie – Head of Revenues and Customer Services
Brian Porter – Head of Resources
Michael Fraser – Finance Manager, Partnerships and Joint Ventures
Carolyn Moir – Service Finance Manager
- 5.4 Detail of the proposed interim arrangements to cover the Chief Financial Officer (Section 95 Officer) responsibilities will be brought to the Council budget meeting of 2 March for approval.

Designation: Head of Corporate Finance

Date: 10 February 2023

Author: Edward Foster

Background Papers: none