

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	14
Report No	RES/44/24

Committee: Corporate Resources

Date: 5 December 2024

Report Title: Banking and Related Financial Transactions – Authorised Signatories List

Report By: Chief Officer – Corporate 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 and the Highland Council Pension Fund.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Approve** the deletion of Allan Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate & Sheila Armstrong, Chief Officer – Revenues and Commercialisation from the list of authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions with immediate effect.
- ii. **Approve** the addition of Jennifer McGonagle, Strategic Lead – People, Carolyn Pieraccini, Strategic Lead - Place and Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager to the authorised signatories list with immediate effect.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** Change will be managed within existing staffing resources.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications.

3.3 **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. This is mitigated through having sufficient appropriate persons authorised.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

3.5 **Gaelic:** There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Background

- 5.1 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”.

6. Formal Changes

6.1 Following the implementation of the Corporate Management Team re-structure, and reflecting changes within the Corporate Finance management team, the changes proposed within this report will result in all authorised signatories being within the remit of and directly reporting to the Section 95 Officer.

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

- Allan Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate
- Sheila Armstrong, Chief Officer – Revenues and Commercialisation

6.3 The following staff should be added to the authorised signatories list with immediate effect:

- Jennifer McGonagle, Strategic Lead – People
- Carolyn Pieraccini, Strategic Lead - Place
- Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager

6.4 If approval is given, the Council’s and Highland Council Pension Fund’s authorised signatories for banking and related financial transactions will be as follows:

- Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance
- Jennifer McGonagle, Strategic Lead – People
- Carolyn Pieraccini, Strategic Lead – Place
- Catriona Stachan, Pensions Manager
- Michael Fraser, Finance Manager

Designation: Chief Officer – Corporate Finance

Date: 12 November 2024

Author: Brian Porter, Chief Officer – Corporate Finance