

To: Council
22 February 2023

**Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers
Executive Director: Delivery – Democratic & Registration Services**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks authorisation for the Council's Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), currently the Chief Executive, to appoint additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DERO) to exercise specific powers on their behalf if they are unable to act personally.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That authority is delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) to appoint additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DERO) to discharge specific powers if the ERO and DERO are unable to act personally.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution designates the Chief Executive as the Council's Electoral Registration Officer and the Assistant Director: Democratic and Registration Services as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer to act on behalf of the ERO (Part 2: Section 6 Table 1 B(4)).
- 3.2 New burdens introduced by the Elections Act 2022 has triggered a review of current arrangements to discharge the functions of the ERO efficiently and effectively. Although the current arrangements work well there is no provision within the Constitution to provide the ERO with the flexibility to appoint additional EROs to exercise specific powers as the need arises.
- 3.3 Unlike Returning Officers, the ERO cannot appoint a deputy themselves unless the power to do so has been delegated to them by the Council.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Two alternative options were considered:
- Maintain the status quo.
 - Identify one or more additional posts for inclusion in the Constitution empowered to act on behalf of the ERO.
- 4.2 Neither option gives the flexibility to the ERO to respond to demands on them and the DERO at critical times.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Elections Act places a number of additional burdens on the ERO. One, in particular has been identified as providing a significant risk if mitigating action is not taken. This is the issue of temporary Voter Authority Certificates (VACs).
- 5.2 VACs are issued centrally via gov.uk. If an application for a VAC is received before the deadline (six working days before an election) but is not determined until after the deadline, a temporary VAC can be issued. These are produced by the council and must be signed by the ERO. At present the level of demand for temporary VACs is unknown and it is therefore prudent to ensure that there will be an adequate number of EROs available to sign certificates as they are issued.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 Not relevant to this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Not relevant to this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The delegation to appoint additional EROs as required will give the ERO flexibility to mitigate the strategic risks associated with the implementation of the provisions within the Elections Act 2022.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The recommendation in Section 2 above is expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 Effective delegation at key points within the election timetable will spread the pressure on key officers.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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