

Report to: Full Council – 7 February 2023

Relevant Officer: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Director Lead: Sue Bearman, Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Lead Officer: Nigel Hill, Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services, Ext. 5243

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Report Title</b>	Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To appoint deputies for the statutory role of Electoral Registration Officer which is held by the Chief Executive
<b>Recommendations</b>	To approve the appointments of the Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services and the Electoral Services Manager as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To enable other officers to act in the absence of the Electoral Registration Officer which may be required given legislative change introduced by the Elections Act 2022.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 John Robinson was appointed into the roles of Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) when confirmed as the Council’s Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service by the Full Council on 10 April 2018.
- 1.2 At the time of the appointment, no deputy appointments were made as the RO can appoint named deputies as required to perform specific election activities and it wasn’t considered that a Deputy ERO was required.
- 1.3 One of the initiatives introduced by the Elections Act 2022 is the requirement for voters to bring a valid form of photographic ID into polling stations to verify their identity. For those voters that do not have any acceptable form of photographic ID they will need to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate.
- 1.4 The Voter Authority Certificates are issued centrally under a government contract once applications are authorised by the ERO. However, those applying late in a specific election timetable will need to be issued with temporary Voter Authority Certificate and

these will need to be produced locally and contain a wet ink signature of the ERO or an appointed Deputy.

- 1.5 It is therefore proposed that the posts of the Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services and the Electoral Services Manager be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for this purpose.
- 1.6 Section 52 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires that the appointment of Deputy ERO's must be made by the Council which appointed the ERO.

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 There will be alternative solutions to providing wet ink signatures on temporary Voter Authority Certificates, such as security measures to identify the certificate as authentic, however it is considered appropriate to appoint formal Deputies now to ensure there is mechanism in place ahead of the elections in May 2023. In addition, it is considered that making such appointments now may future proof any further change which would require the ERO to appoint a Deputy.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None