

Item



Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer

To:

Civic Affairs Committee 8 February 2023

Report by:

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer

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Wards affected:

n/a

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Committee are asked to agree the appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), with full powers, for the Cambridge City Council area.
- 1.2. Electoral Commission guidance recommends the appointment of a Deputy ERO to carry out the functions of the ERO and be available to act in their absence. The Elections Act 2022 places further obligations on the ERO, which it would be more practical for a deputy to undertake.
- 1.3. The guidance further recommends that, “Any deputies appointed should have the skills and knowledge required to carry out the functions that they have been assigned.”

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Committee delegates to the ERO the power to appoint one or more deputies and to revoke or vary such appointments as necessary.
- 2.2. That the committee notes that if recommendation 2.1 is agreed, the ERO would be minded to appoint the Electoral Services Manager as Deputy ERO for Cambridge.

3. Background

- 3.1. Under Section 8(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must appoint a senior officer to the position of ERO. This position is responsible for maintaining and publishing the register of electors for the area. The Chief Executive is the appointed ERO for Cambridge.
- 3.2. Under Section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council may approve the appointment of Deputy EROs to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the ERO.
- 3.3. In Cambridge, the Council have delegated these powers to the Civic Affairs Committee.
- 3.4. Unlike Returning Officers, the ERO cannot appoint a deputy themselves, unless the power to do so has been delegated to them.
- 3.5. Examples of the statutory functions currently placed on the ERO that would, in practice, be better undertaken by a Deputy are:
 - Conducting a registration hearing, following a registration review and an objection to the removal of an elector from the register of electors, and
 - Signing a temporary voter authority certificate (free voter ID), issued to an elector within six days of an election.
- 3.6. In accordance with Electoral Commission guidance, and to ensure that there is an officer available to discharge these functions, it would be sensible to arrange for the ERO to be able to delegate their powers and duties. This would ensure that if it became necessary to hold a hearing or sign a temporary voter authority certificate, it could be dealt with efficiently and effectively without unreasonable delay.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications. The Deputy ERO would not receive any additional payment.

b) Staffing Implications

None. The appointment of a Deputy ERO would be associated with an already designated post and would not require further recruitment.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

None.

d) Environmental Implications

The decision has no environmental implications.

e) Procurement Implications

None.

f) Community Safety Implications

None.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

As this is a statutory appointment, no specific consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

There are no appendices.

8. Inspection of papers and contact

If you have a query on the report please contact Vicky Jenner, Electoral Services Manager, tel: 01223 457057, email:

vicky.jenner@cambridge.gov.uk.