

COUNCIL

DATE	15 th December 2022
REPORT OF	Rob Walsh - Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer
SUBJECT	Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Council has two clear strategic priorities – Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities. Within that second priority, the proposed appointment will support continuous electoral registration which would have an impact on local democracy within North East Lincolnshire.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer (DERO).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Assistant Chief Executive for North East Lincolnshire Council be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer with immediate effect.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To provide organisational resilience to enable the Council to discharge its duties with respect to Electoral Registration.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 Under section 8 (2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must appoint an officer to the position of 'Electoral Registration Officer'. This position is responsible for maintaining the Electoral Register for the area. The Chief Executive is the appointed Electoral Registration Officer for North East Lincolnshire Council.
- 1.2 Under Section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council may appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer who is able to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.3 One of the roles of the Electoral Registration Officer is to hold a hearing in respect of any reviews of registration or any objections received for an application to be included on the Register of Electors. Reviews and objections can be made at any time during the life of the Register. For objections, the

legislation provides that these hearings must be held no earlier than the third day and no later than the seventh day after the notice of objection is received. If a hearing is not held within this timescale, then the Council will be in breach of the legislation.

- 1.4 Since the Council does not currently have a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer then there is a risk the Council could be in breach of the legislation if the Electoral registration Officer is absent for a period when a hearing needs to take place. Therefore, it is recommended that permanent appointment is made to this post in order to remove that risk.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 By appointing a DERO, the Council reduces its chances of being without an Electoral Registration Officer and therefore reduces the risk of the Council being in breach of statutory time limits for dealing with electoral register hearings.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Do nothing – this would put the Council at risk of not being able to deal with electoral register hearings within the statutory timetable, should the Electoral Registration Officer be unavailable.
- 3.2 To appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer to mitigate the risks that the Electoral Registration Office may not be available to deal with electoral register hearings with the statutory timescales.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no reputational and communication considerations arising from this report.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial consequences arising from this appointment.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no implications for children and young people arising from this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

8.1 No consultation has been undertaken.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct financial implications that will arise from this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As set out in the main body of the report, the Local Authority has the power to appoint a Deputy Returning Officer and by doing so it will add additional resilience.

10.2 Appointing a Deputy is common practice across Local Authorities.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The employee is happy to undertake this role as part of their current job.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The proposals contained within the consultation document will affect all Wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None.

14 CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Laura Cowie – Elections Manager (01472) 324295

ROB WALSH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER