

APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER

Executive Summary

The Council is required to appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, roles normally held by the Chief Executive or a member of the Corporate Leadership Team.

In light of the recent resignation of the Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, who currently holds the positions, it is proposed that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Gareth John, takes on the roles.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) Gareth John be appointed Electoral Registration Officer under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with effect from 9 February 2024; and
- (ii) Gareth John be appointed Returning Officer for local government elections under Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with effect from 9 February 2024.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report recommends that, with effect from 9 February 2024, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, Gareth John, should be appointed as (i) Electoral Registration Officer and (ii) Returning Officer for local government elections.

2.0 Electoral Arrangements

- 2.1 Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 provides for the Council to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer. Section 35 provides for the appointment of a Returning Officer for local government elections. These roles have been undertaken by the existing Chief Executive (Julie Fisher) who has previously announced that she will be stepping down. It is now recommended that these roles transfer to Gareth John, who has previously acted as Deputy Returning Officer for the Authority.
- 2.2 In view of the need to publish election documents under the title of Returning Officer in the coming weeks in preparation for the 2024 elections, including poll cards, it is proposed that Gareth takes up the roles from 9 February 2024.
- 2.3 In considering these proposals, it should be noted that Richard Carr, recently appointed as Managing Director Commissioner of Woking Borough Council by the Secretary of State, has been consulted and supports the appointment of Gareth. Richard Carr will take up his post in April 2024.

3.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 3.1 There are no financial or risk implications arising from these proposals.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 3.2 There are no equalities or human resources implications arising from this report.

Legal

- 3.3 The Council is required by statute to appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

4.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 4.1 Julie Fisher, Richard Carr and Gareth John have been consulted on the proposals and no concerns have been raised.

REPORT ENDS