

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Full Council - 10 January 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Appointment of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Philippa Dart and Karl Roberts, Joint Interim Chief Executives</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:</b> The Council is required to have in place appropriate statutory officers, including the appointment of a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the administration of elections	
<b>DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:</b> The Council's Electoral Services Team sits within the Organisational Excellent directorate and reports to the Group Head of Law and Governance.	
<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY:</b> There is no financial cost associated with this report. Fees paid to the Returning Officer are met from within existing budgets and set on an election-by-election basis.	

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to the appointment of Philippa Dart as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Philippa Dart be appointed as the Returning Officer for local elections, the Electoral Registration Officer for Arun District Council and the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections.

## **3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 3.1 At its annual meeting on 31 May 2023, the Council jointly appointed Philippa Dart (Director of Environment and Communities) and Karl Roberts (Director of Growth) as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer until such time as the Council agrees alternative interim arrangements and/or a permanent replacement is in post.

- 3.2 Both postholders have been operating in the role since 31 May 2023 but have agreed that for both practical and operational reasons it is in the Council's interests to have a single person in the two roles which would ensure effective and clear decision-making in the lead up to and on the day of elections.

#### **4. DETAIL**

- 4.1 The Council is required to have in place appropriate statutory officers, including the appointment of a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the administration of elections.
- 4.2 The Council appointed Philippa Dart and Karl Roberts jointly to the two roles in May 2023 and over the course of working together since that date they consider that greater clarity would be brought to decision-making in relation to electoral registration and elections if a single officer were to be appointed to the positions.
- 4.3 Karl Roberts would continue to support the electoral process as a Deputy Returning Officer.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Philippa Dart and Karl Roberts have both been consulted, together with the Group Head of Law and Governance and the Electoral Services Manager.

#### **6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The alternative option is to continue as currently, which is not considered to be the best option for the reasons set out above.

#### **7. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 7.1 There is no separate payment for the appointment of Electoral Registration Officer.
- 7.2 The role of Returning Officer is appointed by the council but is personally accountable for the effective running of elections and is remunerated by an established schedule of fees that are discussed by West Sussex councils and with the Government, and recouped in part from parish and county councils and the Government as appropriate. Separate Returning Officers would be paid their fees according to ordinary practice and so there will not be any additional financial burden to Arun District Council as a consequence of this decision.

#### **8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 This proposal is itself a measure to reduce and mitigate the risks that are foreseen to be associated with the district, parish and parliamentary elections.

**9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER**

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

**10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

Not applicable

**11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT**

Not applicable

**12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT**

Not applicable

**13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE**

Not applicable

**14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE**

Not applicable

**15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

Not applicable

**16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

Not applicable

**17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** None