

Title of report: **Appointing Deputy Electoral Registration Officers**

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: Friday 3 March 2023

Report by: Director of Governance and Law

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To appoint all Electoral Services Office (ESO) staff with limited powers as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DERO) to enable them to sign Temporary Voter Authority Certificates (TVAC) up to the close of poll for all elections.

Recommendation(s)

That Council agrees that the following ESO staff be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DERO) with limited powers:

- a) Colette Maund (Electoral Services Manager), Amy Hallett (Electoral Services Officer), Bethan Batchelor (Electoral Services Assistant), Alison Catling (Electoral Services Assistant) and Oyebunmi Osiyemi (Electoral Services Assistant)**

Alternative options

The decision maker can, if they wish, approve alternative staff to be appointed, but in doing so the staff would need to comply with statutory guidance and be in the Elections Office during the elections period.

Key considerations

1. The Elections Act 2022 states there is a requirement that all TVAC must be signed by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) with a wet signature before allowing the elector to collect the certificate.
2. The applications are received directly by Electoral Services Staff and need to be dealt with immediately upon receipt to allow electors to obtain their photo ID. Someone with these powers needs to be on site at all times as these applications can be applied for up to 10pm on polling day.
3. If approval for duties is not granted then the ERO would need to be on site at the Electoral Services Office and sign all the TVAC with a wet signature.

Community impact

4. Voters would not be able to vote if they don't receive their signed TVAC in time.

Equality duty

5. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
6. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

Resource implications

7. There are no direct financial implications arising from these changes.

Legal implications

8. Enabling certain authorised Officers to approve Temporary Voter Authority Certificates are new requirements in the Elections Act 2022. The authorisations sought by this report enables this function to be discharged in accordance with the legislation.

Risk management

9. Failure to approve the deputies could result in an Election challenge via an elections petition in the High Court if voters did not receive their signed TVAC.

Consultees

10. None.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None identified.

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published

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|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Governance | Matthew Evans | Date 08/02/2023 |
| Finance | Louise Devlin | Date 13/02/2023 |
| Legal | Francis Fernandes | Date 16/02/2023 |
| Communications | Luenne featherstone | Date 10/02/2023 |
| Equality Duty | Harriet Yellin | Date 08/02/2023 |
| Procurement | Lee Robertson | Date 10/02/2023 |
| Risk | Kevin Lloyd | Date 10/02/2023 |

Approved by Claire Porter Date 17/02/2023

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

ERO – Electoral Registration Officer
ESO – Electoral Services Office
DERO – Deputy Electoral Registration Officer
TVAC – Temporary Voter Authority Certificate