



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL - 20 JANUARY 2021
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 9
Subject	APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Joe Harris, Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Patrick Arran, Monitoring Officer Email: patrick.arran@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To ask Council to appoint Jan Britton as Interim Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the Council for the May 2021 elections and any attendant duties are completed.
Annexes	None
Recommendation/s	It is recommended that: a) Council appoint Jan Briton as Interim Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for all elections due to take place in May 2021 and until any attendant administration is completed. b) Rob Weaver resume his designation as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer immediately upon the May 2021 elections and the attendant administration being completed c) If the elections in May are postponed due to the Covid pandemic, resolutions a) & b) shall be taken to apply to the date the elections actually take place provided that if they are postponed for a period exceeding six months, a further report will be brought to Council.
Corporate priorities	None
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None

1. BACKGROUND

On the 3rd June 2020 due to the retirement of Mr Nigel Adams the Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer & Electoral Registration Officer, Jan Britton, Managing Director of Publica, was appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. This was intended to be a temporary arrangement pending the recruitment of a Chief Executive.

- 1.1 As part of his duties, Mr Britton engaged the Association of Electoral Administrators to conduct a peer review of the election count processes and the final detailed report made a number of recommendations. These recommendations were converted into an action plan for agreement and implementation. Cabinet considered and noted the report and action plan at its meeting on the 7th of December. Since then, Mr Britton has been progressing the actions and preparing for the elections which are extremely complicated given the pandemic and its consequences.
- 1.2 On the 23rd September 2020, Rob Weaver was appointed as Chief Executive by Council. Mr Weaver was also designated as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer at that meeting. Mr Weaver commenced employment with the authority on the 4th January 2021.
- 1.3 Given the detailed involvement Jan Britton has had with the election review and preparation for the elections, to ensure consistency, it would be prudent to ask him to see the work through, but to satisfy the legal requirements, Council has to formally designate him into the roles.
- 1.4 At the time of writing the report, the Government intends the elections to take place as planned. However, given the current issues caused by the resurgence of infections, some contingency has been built into the recommendations. As soon as officers are made aware of any changes to the planned elections, they will inform members. If the elections are postponed for a period in excess of six months, a further report will be brought to Council.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. There are no financial implications for this Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The Council must appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer to be responsible for and organise elections on its behalf.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. There are no risks identified as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 5.1. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations made in this report.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1. The Council must appoint a Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer and has designated Mr Weaver into this role. Council could decide not to follow the recommendations, but this is not recommended.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

(END)