

Appointment of the Returning Officer

16 December 2020

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Council to consider appointing the City Council's Director, Communities and Environment, Mr Mark Davies, as the Council's Returning Officer with immediate effect.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That Council appoints Mr Mark Davies, Director, Communities and the Environment to the role of Returning Officer with immediate effect.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The role of a Returning Officer (RO) is enshrined in law. It can fall automatically upon the holder of specific job, such as Chief Executive, as is currently the case at the City Council, or it can be applied to an individual appointed by Council. Performance standards for the RO are set by the Electoral Commission.

2.0 Reasons for the Appointment

- 2.1 The City Council is required to have a RO in place.
- 2.2 On 25 September 2019, the Council appointed its Chief Executive, Mr Kieran Keane, to the role of RO. However, Mr Keane has prior commitments in May 2021 which will mean he is unable to perform the duties of RO. Mr Mark Davies, the Council's Director for Communities and Environment, is therefore recommended to Council for appointment as RO. Mr Davies has significant experience of elections having been involved in inspection duties on polling day and providing the security arrangements at the counts for many years.
- 2.3 In May 2021, the City Council is scheduled to run elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Lancashire County Council as well as any City and Parish by-elections which are called. There is currently a vacancy for Kellet ward, although an election has not yet been requested.
- 2.4 Work is already underway to prepare for these major elections, therefore the recommendation is for the new RO to be in place immediately.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 Council is asked to appoint the City Council's Director for Communities and Environment, Mr Mark Davies, as RO with effect from this meeting.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) None directly arising from this report.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS As set out above in 2.1. The Council must have an RO in place.	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS RO fees for external elections are set, and paid for, by the party requesting the election (a fees and charges order is produced for Parliamentary elections, for example, which sets the fees for all ROs).	
OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS None.	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments	
MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments	
BACKGROUND PAPERS None	Contact Officer: Debbie Chambers Telephone: 01524 582057 E-mail: dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk Ref: