

Report to COUNCIL

Deputy Electoral Registration Officers

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Reason for Decision

Electoral Commission guidance recommends the appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer (DERO) to carry out the functions of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and be available to act in their absence. The Elections Act 2022 places further obligations on the ERO, which it would be more practical for a deputy to undertake. The guidance further recommends that, “Any deputies appointed should have the skills and knowledge required to carry out the functions that they have been assigned.” Appointment of DEROs provides resilience and ensures that there is an officer available to discharge these functions.

Recommendations

That the Council approves the appointments of Alex Bougategf, Director of Legal (Monitoring Officer), Heather Moore, Assistant Director of Governance and Jenna Madeley, Head of Elections and Land Charges as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for Oldham, having the same duties as the Electoral Registration Officer with immediate effect.

Appointment of additional Deputy Electoral Registrations Officers

1 Background

- 1.1 Under Section 8(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must appoint a senior officer to the position of Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). This position is responsible for maintaining and publishing the register of electors for the area. The Chief Executive was appointed as the ERO for Oldham Council at a meeting of the Full Council on 6 March 2025.
- 1.2 Under Section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council may appoint of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DEROs) to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the ERO. Unlike Returning Officers, the ERO cannot appoint a deputy themselves.
- 1.3 Examples of the statutory functions currently placed on the ERO that would, in practice, be better undertaken by a Deputy are:
- To hold a hearing in respect of any reviews of registration or any objections received for an application to be included on the Register of Electors. For objections, the legislation provides that these hearings must be held no earlier than the third day and no later than the seventh day after the notice of objection is received. If a hearing is not held within this timescale, then the Council will be in breach of the legislation.
 - Signing a temporary voter authority certificate (free voter ID), issued to an elector within six days before the election. The Elections Act 2022 introduced the requirement for voters to show photographic identification at polling stations to verify their identity. Voters who do not have any acceptable form of photographic ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate. Those applying close to a specific election may need to be issued with a temporary Voter Authority Certificate which will need to be produced locally and contain a wet ink signature of the ERO or an appointed Deputy.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 No other options are put forward for consideration, as the officers detailed in the report have the appropriate skills and experience in the role of DERO.

3 Preferred Option

- 3.1 That Council appoints the DEROs as detailed in the report.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 As this is a statutory appointment, no specific consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report, but relevant officers are aware of the proposals and will be asked to

5 **Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications as the Deputy ERO would not receive any additional payment.

6 **Legal Implications**

6.1 As set out in the body of the report.

7. **Procurement Implications**

7.1 None.

8 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

8.1 No.

9 **Key Decision**

9.1 No.

10 **Key Decision Reference**

10.1 N/A

11 **Background Papers**

11.1 None.

12 **Appendices**

12.1 None.