

# Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Council  
Date: 3 June 2024  
Ward(s) affected: All  
Report of Strategic Director of: Chief Executive  
Report Author: Pedro Wrobel  
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Status: Open  
Key decision: No

## Appointment of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

### 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In December 2022 Waverley Borough Council appointed Robin Taylor as Waverley's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 1.2 However, in the light of the recent appointment of Pedro Wrobel as the Chief Executive at Waverley Borough Council, it is proposed that Pedro Wrobel, being the most senior Officer of the Council, be appointed as Waverley's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

### 2.0 Recommendation to Council

#### That the Council resolves to:

- 2.1 Appoint, with effect from 4 June 2024, Pedro Wrobel, Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, as the Returning Officer for

local elections, the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections, and the Electoral Registration Officer; and

- 2.2 Appoint, with effect from 4 June 2024, Chailey Gibb, Electoral Services Manager, as Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Council is required to have in place appropriate statutory officers, including the appointment of a Returning Officer for the administration of elections and an Electoral Registration Officer for the registration of electors.

### **4.0 Status of Report**

- 4.1 No part of this report is exempt from publication.

### **5.0 Strategic Priorities**

- 5.1 One of the Council's priorities being considered in the forthcoming Corporate Strategy is to achieve a resilient and well-managed Council and this appointment supports that strategic objective.

### **6.0 Background**

- 6.1 The Returning Officer (RO) is the person who has overall responsibility for the conduct of elections in Waverley. Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer in local elections. It is the RO's duty to organise and conduct elections.

- 6.2 The RO is an officer of the Council, but the role of the RO is a personal responsibility independent and separate from their duties as an employee of the Council. The RO may appoint one or more persons to discharge all or any of their functions.

- 6.3 Similarly, section 8 of the 1983 Act requires the Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). The ERO is the person with the statutory responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the register of electors. The ERO is

also the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections. The High Sherriff of Surrey is the Returning Officer at parliamentary elections as an honorary position.

6.4 The ERO is an officer of the Council, but the role of ERO is also a personal responsibility, independent and separate from their duties as an employee of the Council. The roles of RO and ERO are typically combined and performed by a single person. The appointment to these roles is a function of the full Council.

6.5 Robin Taylor, RO and ERO for Waverley Borough Council, has performed the duties of his role admirably. However, it is considered appropriate for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, as the most senior Officer of Waverley Borough Council to be appointed to the role with immediate effect.

## **7.0 Options**

7.1 One option is for the Council to appoint Pedro Wrobel the Waverley Returning Officer and Electoral Registration officer.

7.2 A second option would be to appoint a different officer of the Council to these roles.

## **8.0 Consultation**

8.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Leader of the Council.

## **9.0 Key Risks**

9.1 It is imperative to have a competent, experienced and trained senior officer to undertake the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer to ensure the smooth running of the statutory electoral process.

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 The Council is required by sections 8 and 35 of the Representation of People Act 1983 to appoint, respectively, an ERO and RO for local

elections (and Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections).

## **11.0 Financial Implications**

11.1 When performing their role, the RO is remunerated by an established schedule of fees that are discussed by Surrey Councils and with the Government, and recouped, dependent on the election, from the County Council and Parish Councils (in respect of local elections) and from the Government as appropriate (in respect of Police & Crime Commissioner elections and national elections and referenda). The RO's fee for organising and conducting Borough Council elections is paid by the Council.

11.2 There are no additional financial implication associated with this proposal.

## **12.0 Human Resources Implications**

12.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this proposal.

## **13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

13.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

## **14.0 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 There are no climate change and sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **15.0 Background Papers**

15.1 None

## **16.0 Appendices**

16.1 None