

09 November 2020 at 5.00 pm

This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom,
and livestreamed here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIT1f_F5OfvTzxjZk6Zqn6g

Despatched: 30.10.20



Governance Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Eyre; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Nelson
Cllrs. Barnes, Bayley, Clayton, Penny Cole and Harrison

Agenda

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 November 2019, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 2)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interest not already registered		
3. Actions from the previous meeting (if any)		
4. Appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer	(Pages 3 - 4)	Nicola Fletcher Tel: 01732 227188
5. Work Plan	(Pages 5 - 6)	

EXEMPT INFORMATION

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

If you wish to obtain further factual information on any of the agenda items listed above, please contact the named officer prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact Democratic Services on 01732 227000 or democratic.services@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

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GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2019 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Eyre (Chairman)

Cllr. Pearsall (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Barnes, Bayley, Clayton, Penny Cole and Harrison

Cllrs. Perry Cole and Edwards-Winser were also present.

6. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 11 July 2019, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

8. Actions from the previous meeting

There were none.

9. Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling stations

The Chief Officer Customer & Resources introduced the Electoral Services Manager and the Electoral Consultant Richard Beesley who presented the report on a statutory consultation regarding the polling districts and polling places within the District. The report made recommendations to confirm the location of every polling place throughout the district, and requested that a minor change to one existing polling district be implemented.

In response to a Member's concerns that the response to the consultation comments with regards to St John's Church Hall causing lower turnout due to the disadvantage experienced by voters from the Hillingdon (BV) end of the ward, the reasoning set out at paragraph 18 of the report was reiterated. Whilst the current venue was not ideal for all electors it still represented the best location that could currently be provided, and there would always be some electors who would need to travel further than others. The promotion of postal voting was suggested by other Members.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that

Agenda Item 1

Governance Committee - 5 November 2019

- a) the minor adjustment the boundary between polling districts BZ (Lower St. John's) and CC (Upper St. John's) be agreed, such that all properties are included in the same polling district;
- b) all other polling district boundaries be retained and unchanged; and
- c) the proposed polling places as set out in Appendix C to the report, be agreed.

10. Report of the 'Chairman Role' working group

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services introduced the report by the Members working group on the roles of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council. The Chairman explained the findings of the Working Group and responded to questions, using his discretion to allow the current Chairman of the Council, Councillor Edwards-Winser, to address the Committee.

Resolved: That

- a) the report of the Members working group and its recommendations be noted;
- b) it be recommended to Council that the Member working group recommendations be adopted subject to any necessary growth item being approved through the formal budget-making process; and
- c) any recommendations for growth be referred to the next meeting of the Finance Advisory Committee for consideration.

11. Work Plan

The work plan was noted, with the addition of the review of any recommendations taken forward at Council of the Chairman's Role. A review/update on the changes to the boundaries post December election period was mooted with the Chief Officer Customer & Resources advising he would find out whether that would be feasible.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.27 PM

CHAIRMAN

APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

Governance Committee - 9 November 2020

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by:

- Council - 17 November 2020

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: None

Contact Officer: Nicola Fletcher, Ext. 7188

Recommendation to Governance Committee:

It is recommended to Council that the Assistant Chief Executive is appointed Deputy Electoral Registration Officer for Sevenoaks District Council.

Recommendation to Council:

The Assistant Chief Executive is appointed Deputy Electoral Registration Officer for Sevenoaks District Council.

Reason for recommendation: Legislation allows District Councils to appoint an officer of the Council as a deputy to the Electoral Registration Officer to act in the absence of the Electoral Registration Officer.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Under section 8(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 the District Council must appoint an Officer to the position of 'Electoral Registration Officer'. This position is responsible for maintaining the Electoral Register for the area. The Chief Executive is appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer for Sevenoaks District Council.
- 2 Under section 52(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 the Council may appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer who is able to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the Electoral Registration Officer.
- 3 One of the roles of the Electoral Registration Officer is 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. Reviews and

Agenda Item 4

objections can be made at anytime during the life of the Register. The objections may be in relation to an existing elector as well as new applications. 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 was received. If a hearing is not held within this timescale then the Council will be in breach of the legislation.

- 4 The role of the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer is currently assigned to the Chief Officer Corporate Support (now Customer & Resources). However, following an organisational restructure the role of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer is to be assigned to the Assistant Chief Executive.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications to this appointment.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The appointment of the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer reflects the current organisational structure and will mitigate risks in the event that the Electoral Registration Officer is unavailable as his deputy will be able to undertake his duties.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

It is recommended that Council appoints a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer to reduce the risks of not being able to administer electoral register hearings within the statutory timescale as the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer will have the same powers.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

[Representation of the People Act 1983, Sections 8 and 52](#)

Dr Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive

Governance Committee Work Plan 2019/21 (as at 29/10/2020)

9 November 2020	4 February 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021
Appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer			

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