

02 February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

Published: 25.01.23



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

Governance Committee

Membership:

Chairman, Cllr. Eyre; Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Nelson

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

Agenda

There are no fire drills planned. If the fire alarm is activated, which is a continuous siren with a flashing red light, please leave the building immediately, following the fire exit signs.

	Pages	Contact
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 November 2022, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 4)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interest not already registered		
3. Actions from the previous meeting (if any)		
4. Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers	(Pages 5 - 8)	Lee Banks Tel: 01732 227161 Nicola Fletcher Tel: 01732 227188
5. Work Plan	(Pages 9 - 10)	

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.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Eyre (Chairman)

Cllr. Nelson (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs. Barnes, Bayley and Harrison

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Penny Cole

6. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting on the 21 June 2022 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

8. Actions from the previous meeting

There were none.

9. 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review

Members considered a report which outlined a proposal to submit a final consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the proposed changes to local Parliamentary boundaries expected to take effect in 2023.

The report laid out that as the BCE was due to publish its revised proposals around 8 November, a final consultation period would ensue lasting 4 weeks. The report therefore sought the Committee's approval to either; issue a statement of support for the revised proposals if they were aligned with the Council's counter proposals, or give Members the opportunity to submit further views to Officers to be collated and then approved by the Chairman of the Governance Committee. The Council's final response would then be submitted to the BCE.

Members discussed the report and highlighted the importance of ensuring that as much input was received from Members as possible which would be collated to provide a thorough response for submission.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that:

- (a) the revised proposals from the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) for the Parliamentary boundaries for the Sevenoaks District Council area due to be published around 8 November, be noted; and
- (b) Council submit a final consultation response to the Boundary Commission for England in accordance with one of the options below:
 - ii. If the revised proposals directly align to the Council's counter proposal submitted to the initial consultation, a statement of support for that proposal be drafted, or
 - iii. If the initial proposals were unchanged, or do not align directly with the Council's counter proposal that Members be provided with the opportunity to submit further views to Officers for collation, to inform a draft, final consultation response, agreed with the Chairman of Governance Committee. Members' views would be collated through a short survey or drop in session

10. Governance Working Group - Development Control Committee Procedures

At its meeting on the 13 April 2022 the Committee determined to constitute a Working Group to propose adjustments to Part 7 of the Constitution concerning Development Control Committee procedures. The Monitoring Officer presented the final report of the Working Group.

The Working Group had considered various practices of the Development Control Committee. The Changes consisted of bringing practices up to date, alterations to streamline meetings and codify existing practices in regards to presentations by speakers.

The Chairman thanked the Working Group for their input and thanked the Officers for lending their time to assist.

Members discussed the report and associated appendix.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council that the amendments to Part 7 of the Constitution as laid out in the report and appendix take effect from the 2023/24 municipal year.

11. The Council's Policy Framework - (Appendix F Of The Constitution)

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which updated Members that following the annual review of the Council's Policy Framework (appendix F), the Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan was required to be adopted by Council and therefore was unable to be adopted by Cabinet.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of clarification. The Monitoring Officer advised that the Council's Policy Framework was under review annually and would be kept updated and in-line with legislation and other guidance.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

12. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.11 PM

CHAIRMAN

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APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS

Governance Committee - 2 February 2023

Report of: Chief Executive

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder: None

Also Considered by: Council - 21 February 2023

Contact Officer: Lee Banks, Ext. 7161
Nicola Fletcher, Ext. 7188

Recommendation to Governance Committee:

It is recommended to Council that the Chief Officer Customer & Resources, the Electoral Services Manager and the Deputy Electoral Services Manger are appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for Sevenoaks District Council.

Recommendation to Council:

The Chief Officer Customer & Resources, the Electoral Services Manager and the Deputy Electoral Services Manger are appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for Sevenoaks District Council.

Reason for recommendation: Legislation allows District Councils to appoint officers of the Council as a deputy to the Electoral Registration Officer to act in the absence of the Electoral Registration Officer. With new responsibilities enacted in relation to Voter ID, it is considered appropriate to appoint additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers to ensure voters are able to obtain a temporary voter authority certificate from the District Council.

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. The role is currently assigned to the post of Assistant Chief Executive.

The Voter Identification Regulations 2022

- 3 Regulations 18 and 19 of the Voter Identification Regulations 2022 set out the circumstances in which a temporary voter certificate must be issued, that they must be issued by the District Council and that amongst other details a temporary voter authority certificate must contain the registration officers' signature.
- 4 Accompanying guidance issued by the Electoral Commission sets out further that the Electoral Registration Officer's (ERO) signature can be provided by a deputy and should be a wet ink signature. It is also recommended that the ERO should consider appointing additional Deputy ERO's. This is to ensure that there is sufficient available resource to sign a temporary Voter Authority Certificate at potentially very short notice, up to 5pm on a polling day.

Appointment of additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers

- 5 To support the Electoral Registration Officer in ensuring new duties introduced by the Voter Identification Regulations, alongside all other duties permitted to be undertaken by a Deputy ERO can be fulfilled, it is recommended that the Chief Officer Customer & Resources, the Electoral Services Manager and the Deputy Electoral Services Manager are appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for Sevenoaks District Council.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

- 7 None.

Key Implications

Financial

- 8 There are no financial implications arising from the recommended appointments.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

- 9 The appointment of additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers provides resilience and mitigates risks in the event that the Electoral Registration Officer is unavailable to fulfil his duties.

Equality Impacts

- 10 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.

Net Zero Implications

- 11 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

Conclusions

- 12 It is recommended that Council appoints additional Deputy Electoral Registration Officers to reduce the risks of not being able to administer electoral registration duties, including those associated with the introduction of Voter ID, as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers will have the same powers.

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

Representation of the People Act 1983, Sections 8 & 52 -
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2>

Voter Identification Regulation 2022, Sections 18 & 19 -
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/1382/contents/made>

Dr Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive

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Governance Committee - 2 February 2023 - Work Plan (As at 05/1/23)

2 February 2023	19 June 2023	Autumn 2023
Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers	Report Of The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel	

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