



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 5th March 2018

To the Chair and Members of COUNCIL

APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL RETURNING OFFICER FOR THE BARNSELY, DONCASTER, ROTHERHAM AND SHEFFIELD COMBINED AUTHORITY ELECTION

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Jane Nightingale	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. To note the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive Johanna Miller, as the Local Returning Officer for the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority election to be held on 3rd May 2018.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. To note the appointment of the Council's Chief Executive Johanna Miller, as the Local Returning Officer for the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority election to be held on 3rd May 2018.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People's Act 1983 requires that Councils appoint an officer for local elections. There is a requirement for Doncaster MBC to appoint a Local Returning Officer who will ensure that the upcoming Combined Authority election is delivered in Doncaster in accordance with all legal requirements.

BACKGROUND

5. Johanna Miller, the Chief Executive of Doncaster Council, has been appointed by Council to act as the Returning Officer for all elections held within Doncaster. This is compliant with the Council's duties under the Representation of the People's Act 1983 to appoint one of its officers as Returning Officer.
6. An election will be held on 3rd May 2018 to elect a Mayor for the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority area. The Combined Authority has appointed its Chief Executive, Dave Smith, as Returning Officer for the election, but each voting area (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) are required to appoint a Local Returning Officer to ensure that the election is administered appropriately in its own area.
7. Members will recall recent issues surrounding the Combined Area and the desire of Doncaster and Barnsley Councils to join a Wider Yorkshire devolution model rather than a smaller South Yorkshire arrangement. Members will also recall the Community Poll which was held during December 2017 which overwhelmingly demonstrated that the preference of the people of Doncaster and Barnsley was also to join a Wider Yorkshire rather than the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority.
8. Following the outcome of the Community Poll, Ros Jones the Mayor of Doncaster and the Leader of Barnsley Council both wrote to Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, proposing that the May 2018 election be postponed and that the desire of Doncaster and Barnsley to join a Wider Yorkshire proposition be respected. Unfortunately, these discussions have not, to date, been successful and in May 2018 the Combined Authority election will take place at an estimated cost of £2,000,000.00 (Two Million Pounds). It remains the ambition of Doncaster Council and almost all of the other local authorities in Yorkshire to establish a Wider Yorkshire Combined Authority. In order to achieve this aim, Doncaster Council will need to leave the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9. Option 1 - To appoint Johanna Miller as Local Returning Officer (Recommended).
10. Johanna Miller has been appointed by the Council as its Returning Officer for all elections in Doncaster. Ms Miller is an experienced Returning Officer and has substantial elections expertise.
11. Option 2 – Do not appoint Johanna Miller as Local Returning Officer (Not Recommended)
12. The Council has a legal duty to appoint a Local Returning Officer. Ms Miller has already been appointed by Council as its Returning Officer for all elections in Doncaster.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

13. Johanna Miller has been appointed by the Council as its Returning Officer for all elections in Doncaster. Ms Miller is an experienced Returning Officer and has substantial elections expertise.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

14.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	None
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	None
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	None

	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	None
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	The Council, along with its partners in the Combined Authority, are legally required to hold an election in May 2018 to elect a Mayor who will chair the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority. Officers of the Council will be heavily involved during the election to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties in respect of elections

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

15. To not appoint a Local Returning Officer would place the Council in breach of its statutory duties.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials HW Date 22.2.18.]

16. Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People's Act 1983 requires a Council to appoint an officer to be the Returning Officer for local elections. The Council has previously appointed its Chief Executive, Johanna Miller, as the Returning Officer for all elections to be held in Doncaster. In order to comply with the requirement of the Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017, a further appointment must be made to appoint Johanna Miller as Local Returning Officer for a Combined Authority election. This report complies with the Council's duties under that Order.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials AT Date 22/02/18]

17. The appointment of the Council's Chief Executive as the Local Returning Officer will not incur any additional costs as the fee that is normally payable for other elections, i.e. a General Election, is not being taken by any of the Local Returning Officers. Therefore, the time taken to complete the role of the Local Returning Officer will be met from existing budgets.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CB Date 22.02.18.]

18. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 22.02.18..]

19. There are no technology implications arising from this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials RS..Date 22.02.18...]

20. Effective political processes improve health and wellbeing. Properly appointing a returning officer will contribute to democratic accountability and improved health and wellbeing

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials : SF Date...22/02/2018]

21. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

CONSULTATION

22. The appointment of Johanna Miller as Local Returning Officer for the Combined Authority election has been discussed by both the Mayor of Doncaster and the Chief Executive of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority in his role as Returning Officer for the election.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

23. Council Report - Confirmation Of Appointment Of Chief Executive, Head Of Paid Service, Returning Officer And Electoral Registration Officer 8th December 2011

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