

# REPORT FOR: **COUNCIL**

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**Date of Meeting:**

4<sup>TH</sup> July 2013

**Subject:**

Appointment of Returning Officer

**Responsible Officer:**

Chief Executive

**Exempt:**

No

**Enclosures:**

None

## Summary and Recommendations

This report suggests a revision to how Returning Officer duties are discharged in the Council.

**Recommendations:**

The Chief Executive be appointed as the Council's Returning Officer; and  
The Director of Legal & Governance Services be appointed the Deputy Returning Officer.

## **Introduction**

Planning is now under way for the elections in May 2014. At the time of writing the report it is likely that the local elections will be delayed until May 22<sup>nd</sup>, to be combined with the European Poll.

## **Returning Officer Duties**

As part of the planning process the discharge of Returning Officer duties was reviewed, and it was suggested that, in line with most other London Boroughs, the Chief Executive should undertake this role.

The role of Returning Officer is a role separate to that of a Council officer, and the duties are undertaken personally. If any claim is brought in respect of the conduct of an election therefore, it is made against the named Returning Officer and not the Council.

In accordance with the Council's Pay Policy Statement, Returning Officer duties are remunerated separately, in accordance with detailed provisions which vary depending on the election.

## **Financial Implications**

The costs of most elections are met externally, with the exception of the local elections which Harrow funds. With the proposed changes to duties the costs of future elections will be contained within prescribed budgets.

## **Risk Management Implications**

The conduct of all elections is subject to detailed planning and risk management. Given the scale of the operation on Election Day it is impossible to eliminate all risk, but the authority currently exceeds most the Electoral Commission's performance standards, which include risk management.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Hugh Peart



Monitoring Officer

Date: 2 July 2013

## **Section 4 - Contact Details**

Contact: Hugh Peart, Director of Legal & Governance Services