



Council

3 March 2025

**Subject: Combined Authority (Mayoral Elections) – Appointment of Local Returning Officer**

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to confirm the arrangements in relation to the forthcoming Mayoral election and ensure that Mr Ian Knowles, Chief Executive is correctly appointed as Local Returning Officer for the Mayoral election on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

It is recommended:

- (1) That Council confirm the arrangement to appoint Mr Ian Knowles, Chief Executive as the Local Returning Officer for the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral election on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The relevant legal provisions are contained in the Combined Authority (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017, as amended, and in particular article 6A and paragraph 1 (5) (2FB) Schedule 2:

**6A.—**(1) The combined county authority must appoint one of its officers, or one of the officers of a constituent council, to be the combined county authority returning officer in relation to the election.

(2) The combined county authority returning officer may give, to a returning officer, directions relating to the discharge of the returning officer's functions at the election, including directions requiring the provision to the combined county authority returning officer of any information which the returning officer has or is entitled to have, directions requiring the returning officer to take specified steps in preparation for the election, directions that the ballot papers must be printed by the combined county authority returning officer and directions that the count of votes must be conducted at a central location.

(3) It is the duty of a returning officer to whom directions are given under paragraph (2) to discharge the returning officer's functions at the election in accordance with the directions.

(2FB) Where, in relation to an area within the area of the combined county authority, there is both a district council and a county council, the district council must appoint an officer of the council to be the returning officer for the election of a combined county authority mayor.

### **Financial : FIN/152/25/VA**

The cost of the Mayoral election will be funded by the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority.

**Staffing :** The Council facilitates, administers and ensures the safe, legal, efficient operation of elections and staff are sought internally and externally as required to ensure this is actioned. The Democratic and Elections Service are the lead area on this for the Council and are directed by the Local Returning Officer

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :** Equality impact assessments are conducted in relation to polling stations to ensure all entitled to vote have the opportunity to do so. Staff are also provided with training on how to assist voters with disabilities and guidance is provided in the handbooks given to staff.

**Data Protection Implications :** The Electoral Registration Officer is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and ensures compliance with data protection requirements in accordance with the electoral commission guidance and relevant legislation.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:** None associated with this report

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:** The Council has a single point of contact at Lincolnshire Police and staff are advised through their training and materials provided, what they should do if they encounter any crime or disorder during an election.

**Health Implications:** None arising from this report

[Combined Authority and Combined County Authority Returning Officer guidance for Combined Authority Mayoral elections](#)

[The Combined Authorities \(Mayoral Elections\) Order 2017](#)

**Risk Assessment :**

This decision is required to ensure the Council is compliant with the legislation and the direction from the Electoral Commission.

To fail to appoint a Local Returning Officer as required by the Combined Authority Returning Officer, could result in legal challenge, intervention from the Electoral Commission, and the Council being unable to deliver the election as directed.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

X

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to appoint a Local Returning Officer to be responsible for administering the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority Mayoral elections in Lincolnshire at a local level.
- 1.2 The Mayoral Combined Authority has power in legislation to appoint Local Returning Officers and the purpose of this report is to seek confirmation of the arrangement.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Mayoral election for Greater Lincolnshire will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025. A Combined County Authority Returning Officer (CCARO) has already been appointed (Mr R. Walsh, North East Lincolnshire Council), and he will require the Lincolnshire District Authorities to appoint a Local Returning Officer who will be responsible for running the election at a local level.
- 2.2 The Mayoral election will take place at the same time as the Lincolnshire County Council election which will also take place on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 and preparations are already well underway for both elections. The Chief Executive is the Local Returning Officer for the Lincolnshire County Council election.
- 2.3 The Electoral Commission has advised that a non-constituent Council should formally appoint an officer to be the Local Returning Officer for the Mayoral Combined Authority election. For the purposes of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority, West Lindsey District Council is a non-constituent Council.

## **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Council confirm the arrangement to appoint Mr Ian Knowles, Chief Executive as the Local Returning Officer for the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral election on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025.