

Council
27 May 2021

Report of the Director of Corporate and Customer Services

ELECTION OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Member of the largest political group be elected Leader of the Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.
2. That a Member of the largest political group be elected Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.

WARDS AFFECTED

District-wide

STRATEGIC LINK

The political leadership of the Council is a critical part of the authority's good governance, which enables the delivery of the Corporate Plan and our strategic priorities.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has historically appointed a Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council by the convention that the posts would be filled by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest political group on the Council.
- 1.2 In November 2020, the Council voted to confirm Councillor Garry Purdy as Leader of the Council and Councillor Susan Hobson as Deputy Leader of the Council for the remainder of the 2020/21 municipal year.

2 REPORT

- 2.1 Whilst the Constitution is presently silent on the method by which the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council are elected, the common practice across local authorities in England is for that appointment to be made at the Annual Meeting of the Council, other than in authorities which operate Leader and Cabinet model executive arrangements, where a Leader is appointed to serve a four year term.

- 2.2 This report proposes that the Council, at its annual meeting, elects a Leader and Deputy Leader for the 2021/22 municipal year. In doing so, it is recommended that both offices are filled by members of the largest political group on the Council.
- 2.3 Upon election by the Council, the Leader and Deputy Leader will receive Special Responsibility Allowances in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 2.4 At its meeting on 22 April 2021, the Council agreed to establish a Constitution Working Group to work with the Monitoring Officer to bring forward proposals to strengthen the governance arrangements of the authority. Amongst the areas requiring work is the introduction of provisions for the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this paper beyond what has been set out in the main body of the report above.

3.2 Financial

The Member Allowances Scheme makes provision for the payment Special Responsibility Allowances to the Leader and Deputy Leader. The agreed budget for 2021/22 contained provision for the payment of these allowances. Therefore it is considered that the financial risk associated with these proposals is low.

3.3 Corporate Risk

Failure to appoint a Leader and Deputy Leader would remove the interface between the political leadership of the Council and its officers. This may impact on the good governance of the Council and could be considered to weaken the ability of the authority to act in the best interests of residents and businesses in the district.

4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property and it is considered there are no direct impacts on any of these areas.

5 CONTACT INFORMATION

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6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Report to Council (26 November 2020) – Political Balance, Political Groups and Entitlement to Seats on Committees
- 6.2 Minutes of Council meeting held on 26 November 2020 – Minute 172/20 (Political Balance, Political Groups and Entitlement to Seats on Committees)