

**Wiltshire Council**

**Council**

**24 February 2015**

---

## **Appointment of Chief Counting Officer**

---

### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to recommend the formal appointment of a Chief Counting Officer to oversee Neighbourhood Planning referenda where they cross the county boundary and where the greatest number of eligible electors are registered in Wiltshire.

### **Background**

2. The Council has a programme of neighbourhood planning consultations and adoptions. One of the final stages of that adoption requires the holding of a Neighbourhood Planning referendum, and the first was recently held at Malmesbury.
3. Under the regulations, the Returning Officer of the Council automatically assumes the role of Counting Officer for these referenda.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

4. It is expected that one of the next referenda will concern the neighbourhood plan for Freshford and Limpley Stoke. This covers two parishes, one in Wiltshire and one in BANES. The electorates of the two parishes are fairly similar, with Limpley Stoke currently having slightly the greater number.
5. Regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 provides that the relevant council in whose area there is the larger number of electors 'must appoint a person to be Chief Counting Officer'. It is likely, therefore, that the Chief Counting Officer role will fall to an officer of the council.
6. The appointment of a Returning Officer for local elections is made on a personal basis, rather than by office. I am the Returning Officer, and it is recommended for continuity reasons that I should also be appointed Chief Counting Officer for neighbourhood planning referenda where the area of the plan straddles the county boundary and where the greatest number of electors affected are Wiltshire electors.

## **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

7. There are no equalities issues to consider affecting this proposal

## **Risk Assessment**

8. There are no risk issues to consider affecting this proposal, and the Council's insurers have accepted cover for this activity.

## **Financial Implications**

9. There are no financial consequences arising from this proposal

## **Legal Implications**

10. The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 require the Council to appoint a Chief Counting Officer in cases where the neighbourhood plan crosses the county boundary and the greatest number of electors fall within this Council's area

## **Recommendation**

**11. The Council is recommended to appoint Dr. Carlton Brand to be the Chief Counting Officer for the purposes of Regulation 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012**

**Dr Carlton Brand  
Corporate Director**

---

Report Author: John Watling

Head of Electoral Services. Telephone 01249 706599.  
[John.watling@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:John.watling@wiltshire.gov.uk)

5 February 2015.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendices**

None