

**APPOINTMENT OF COUNTY RETURNING OFFICER**

**To:** Full Council

**Date:** 24th March 2015

**From:** Chief Executive

**Purpose:** To appoint Sue Grace, Director of Customer Service and Transformation as County Returning Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Full Council:

- i) Appoint Sue Grace as the County Returning Officer with immediate effect for the duration of her appointment as Corporate Director: Customer Services and Transformation; and
- ii) Agree that the Council shall indemnify Sue Grace against costs arising from any subsequent legal challenge to a County election process subject to the provisions of the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004.

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>	<b><i>Member contact</i></b>
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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The position of County Returning Officer is a personal responsibility of the officer named and in carrying out the role the officer is accountable for fulfilling the statutory responsibilities associated with the role, and not to the Council as their employer.
- 1.2 The County Returning Officer is responsible for:
- the nomination process for candidates and political parties;
  - provision and notification of polling stations;
  - appointment of Presiding Officers and polling clerks;
  - appropriate administration and security of polling stations;
  - preparation of all ballot papers;
  - the actual count and declaration of results;
  - issue, receipt and counting of postal ballot papers;
  - all candidates' election expenses returns;
  - presentation of final account; and
  - reclaiming any funding from external bodies as prescribed.
- 1.3 In two-tier areas the County Returning Officer role delegates their responsibilities to the district councils through the appointment of senior officers of those councils as Deputy Returning Officers.
- 1.4 The County Council is empowered to provide an indemnity to an officer who has specific statutory powers or responsibilities e.g. the Returning Officer. This indemnity protects the Returning Officer in the event of there being a legal challenge to the election, and takes the form of an insurance policy held by the County Council. This is essential because of the potential personal liability risk of the role and the significant costs of the election itself.
- 1.5 Wilma Wilkie, Head of Communications and Community Engagement is the current County Returning Officer. Wilma will leave the authority at the beginning of April and as a result of her impending departure it is necessary to confirm a new County Returning officer appointment.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	N/A