



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No.

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Name of Meeting:	COUNCIL
Meeting Date:	15 March 2007
Directorate:	Governance & Resources
Corporate Manager:	Francis Fernandes
Author/Contact Officer:	Jim Inch 01604 837335
Agenda Status:	Public part of Agenda

Report Title	Appointment of Returning Officer
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Recommendations

That until a permanent new Chief Executive is appointed and commences employment, the offices of Electoral Registration Officer under Section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and Returning Officer: Local Elections under Section 35 of the same Act be filled by the appointment of Jeffrey Steven Ligo as a temporary officer of the Council to these offices.

Background

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 the Council must appoint one of their officers to be the registration officer for the registration of electors and to be the returning officer for local government elections. The registration officer is also ex officio the acting returning officer for Parliamentary Elections (the Mayor being the returning officer).

The Council's Constitution provides for the Chief Executive to be appointed to the two statutory posts. However the duties of the posts would distract the Interim Chief Executive, John Edwards, from the principal requirement of his role to support the Council's recovery.

The Authority's Lead Official has put forward Mr Jeff Ligo as someone who might be able to fill the returning officer role on an interim basis. Discussions have taken place with him and he would be happy to take on the role. He offers his services as an individual rather than through a company and it seems it will be possible to appoint him directly to the statutory offices. Discussions are continuing and references are being taken up.

Options and Evaluation of Options

1. Try to find a local alternative candidate – none appear to be available or appropriate.
2. Make an internal appointment – given the priorities of the Council that would detract from progressing improvement in other vital areas.
3. As recommended in the Report – this is an effective and suitable solution.

Financial Implications

The cost of the appointment may not be covered by existing budgets and may have to be taken from the Council's reserves.

Background Papers

Council's Constitution
Relevant Legislation