

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

PROMOTION OF COUNCIL ELECTION



Report Reference C-22-13
Meeting Date 4th July 2022
Agenda Item 11
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

The next ordinary elections for the Town Council take place in May 2023. All 15 seats will be up for election and the new ward boundaries will be implemented. The May 2019 elections were uncontested with only 14 people putting themselves forward for election.

Competitive elections are a central tenet of a representative democracy; the democratic legitimacy of the council is strengthened when councillors are elected through a contested poll and more widely, uncontested elections damage the legitimacy and credibility of the local council sector. It is therefore in the Council's corporate interest to see contested elections.

2.0 PROPOSAL

It is suggested that the council hosts two 'Be a councillor?' public engagement sessions in January/February 2023. These would be designed to:

- a) Promote awareness of the impending elections and changes to ward boundaries
- b) Inform potential candidates of how the council presently operates and its responsibilities
- c) Give potential candidates an understanding of the role and expectations of being a councillor

Two evening sessions would be run - one virtual and one in person. The sessions would include a short talk/presentation from the Town Clerk (A/B) and from existing councillors (B/C). It would provide an opportunity for a Q&A to help potential candidates decide whether to stand for election.

The sessions would also encourage potential candidates to attend/watch council meetings in advance of the election to gain a stronger understanding of how the council operates and the matters currently under discussion.

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

Council should consider approving the outlined 'Be a Councillor?' sessions.