

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy**Electoral Services and Land Charges Establishment Review and Proposed Restructure****1. Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet approval on the proposed Electoral Services and Land Charges restructure, which includes the creation of a new permanent Electoral Services and Land Charges Support Officer part-time role. This is in accordance with all the Council's corporate priorities.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the creation of a new Electoral Services and Land Charges Support Officer post (part-time at 25 hours per week) at Grade 5 be approved, with the additional cost of up to £25,500 being met from General Fund Reserves.

3. Detail

A review of the Electoral Services and Land Charges structure and current service demand has been carried out to establish the following:

- The Council's current and future service needs
- Whether the roles, responsibilities and skills within the current structure are enabling the service to offer the appropriate level of resources to meet the Council's current and future legal obligations, corporate objectives, future challenges and ambitions, in particular Local Government Organisation.
- Whether the current structure has the capacity, resilience and budget to be able to effectively deliver a responsive, proactive and resilient service to enable the Council to fulfil its legal obligations.

In summary the service review found an increasing demand for the Electoral and Land Charges service. Analysis has shown there is a gap in the current structure and by amending an existing post and creating a new permanent post would enable better developmental and succession planning in the service. The introduction of the proposed new post and revising current post responsibilities would make the team more resilient and enable the more junior roles to support with the increase in service demand.

Further details on the review findings and proposals can be found in **Appendix 1** with the job description and person specification for the new post in **Appendix 2**.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The cost of the new Electoral Services and Land Charges Support Officer post at Grade 5 (part-time 25 hours) is £25,500, including oncosts for employers' national insurance and pension contributions, at the top of its pay scale.

Following a recent job evaluation exercise, the nominal cost of the uplift in the Land Charges/ Electoral Services Officer (L16) from Grade 5 to Grade 6 will be contained within existing budgets in 2026/27 and then fully reflected in the establishment budget thereafter.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Elections and Land Charges Services are statutory required to discharge functions under relevant legislation, including the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the Local Land Charges Act 1975 (as amended). Any restructure must ensure sufficient capacity and appropriate service configuration to maintain compliance with statutory duties, statutory timetables and prescribed service standards.

The proposed changes to the Council's staffing establishment and employee contractual terms will need to be in accordance with the recruitment and selection policy.

Formal approval is required by Cabinet as the proposals are outside of Officer delegations.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

HR supports the proposals.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

The report demonstrates a clear need for the new post. UNISON supports this proposal and the reasons for advertising the role internally in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

10. Climate Change Implications

Not applicable.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil.

Appendix 1**Review of Electoral Services and Land Charges**Statutory Function

It is crucial for the Council to ensure elections are run transparently and in line with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the forthcoming Representation of the People Bill to maintain the integrity of elections and local democracy.

Additionally, the Council must comply with the Land Charges Act 1975 (as amended) to ensure the economic functioning of the local economy in relation to property transactions.

Background

Historically there were two officers in the Land Charges team, two officers in Electoral Services and a Head of Service who was the lead on election planning and organisation (i.e. Five full-time officers carrying out both functions).

The Administration team (prior to the centralisation of Business Support) was also based alongside the Electoral Services and Land Charges team and were available to support, particularly with phone calls and election preparation. The Electoral Services and Land Charges teams were combined in 2010 following the resignation of the Electoral Services Manager. Additionally, when the Land Charges Officer took redundancy, it was thought that roles could be cross-trained, which would mean that the two areas of work would be covered for leave and sickness absence. This did not happen due to the demand increase in both functions due to legislation changes.

Electoral Services

In recent years electoral registration work generally and especially event led registration (i.e. in the run up to an election) has increased significantly. All applications for registration or absent votes must be made individually, not as a household, and all applications (registration, absent vote, voter authority certificate) must be accompanied by a National Insurance number or other documentary evidence as proof of identity.

Types of Elections and Referendums

The potential elections and referendums that can occur include:

- UK Parliamentary – no longer than five years apart but can be called at any time
- Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner – every four years (although likely to be abolished at the end of their current term)
- East Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral – every four years
- Broxtowe Borough Council – every four years
- Parish Council Elections – every four years
- Shadow Authority – date to be confirmed but likely within the next two years.
- By-elections – casual vacancies for any of the above could occur at any point

- National and local Referendums – as and when required
- Neighbourhood Plan Referendums on completion of plan before adoption
- Bid Ballots – if required
- Parish Polls – if required
- Recall Petitions – Quite rare but knowledge needs to be within the team to understand what they are and the requirements of a recall petition due to the stringent legal deadlines.

Before Individual Elector Registration and Elections Act changes were implemented applications were limited and received on a sporadic basis.

The table below illustrates the frequency in which the different applications (Postal Voting, Proxy Voting, Overseas Electors, Voter Authority Certificates (VACs), Electoral Registration (ITRs) are processed. The figures show the increases during certain times of the year – especially canvass (September/October), in the run up to an election particularly a Parliamentary and during postal vote reapplication. Parliamentary elections are the biggest risk because they could be called at any time with only six weeks' notice. The number of applications being received dramatically increases as soon as the election is announced. If the applications cannot be processed in good time and followed up for necessary verification and evidence if required, then there is a risk that electors will be disenfranchised.

Date	Postal	Proxy	Overseas	VACs	ITRs	Total Apps
May-24	839	56	83	22	1,138	2,138
Jun-24	2,252	389	127	92	4,015	6,875
Jul-24	125	20	18	14	515	692
Aug-24	42	1	7	4	710	764
Sep-24	109	3	12	5	1,141	1,270
Oct-24	144	1	2	5	950	1,102
Nov-24	98	1	2	2	701	804
Dec-24	46	1	4	3	531	585
Jan-25	27	3	3	1	606	640
Feb-25	34	2	1	4	504	545
Mar-25	130	11	4	6	637	788
Apr-25	380	71	4	21	909	1,385
May-25	40	0	4	6	405	455
Jun-25	51	0	0	2	463	516
Jul-25	38	0	1	2	532	573
Aug-25	93	10	2	3	1,232	1,340
Sept-25	1,934	1	3	1	1,553	3,492
Oct-25	1,334	1	4	1	1,000	2,340
Nov-25	2,746	3	0	1	920	3,670
Dec-25	2,452	0	1	2	352	2,807
Jan-26	855	0	1	0	668	1,524

The Elections Act 2022 (the Act) introduced online applications for postal votes, proxy votes, overseas elector applications and the new Voter Authority Certificates, whilst this reduced some processing time it also increased the complexity, as it included the need to verify all applicant's identities, and increased the number of applications received, again increasing the burden on the team. The Act also extended the UK Parliamentary General Election ('UKPGE') overseas elector franchise to any British Citizen however long they have been out of the country and limited the eligibility to vote to certain EU nationals, again increasing workload and complexity in dealing with such applications. This has led to an increase in demand for the service.

In addition to this there will be further demands on the service because of the forthcoming Government Strategy on Electoral Reform. The Representation of the People Bill was laid in the UK Parliament on 12 February 2026; this is due to become law in time for the next UK Parliamentary general election which must be held before 15 August 2029. Amongst other things the Bill includes votes for 16/17-year-olds, the introduction of automated voter registration, changes to statutory deadlines and the introduction of UK-issued bank cards as ID in polling stations. The team will need to amend or incorporate processes to ensure the Council align and are legally compliant with all forthcoming changes.

Current Structure

The Electoral Services and Land Charges team consists of:

- Electoral Services Manager
- Senior Electoral Services/Land Charges Officer
- Land Charges/Electoral Services Officer
- Temporary Electoral Services Support Officer.

The Temporary Electoral Services Support Officer was recruited in September 2025 to support the postal vote reapplication process which was introduced as part of the Elections Act 2022. Of the 15,500 postal voters 13,185 were contacted to inform them their postal vote would expire on 31 January 2026 unless they reapplied. Incoming applications are received online through the Government's ERO Portal and also on paper, all applicants must provide identity verification in the form of a National Insurance Number or by supplying documentary evidence eg a passport. This high number of applications will then need renewing every three years, with a smaller number required to reapply in intervening years. This project has been a success with over 9,000 electors successfully reapplying for their postal vote. However, 3,800 electors did not reapply by the deadline, so it is expected there will be a peak in applications following the despatch of cancellation letters and prior to future elections, particularly the next UKPGE. The temporary member of staff also assists the senior Electoral Officers with other admin tasks to enable both Officers to focus on more complex work and supports the Land Charges Officer with the registering of searches.

Reason for proposalFuture Work

Along with the day-to-day electoral registration/land charges workload the following additional work will be required of the team over the next few years.

- Any unscheduled by-elections or Neighbourhood Plan Referenda (as required in August 2025 and December 2025).
- The Representation of the People Bill will introduce strategic changes to the Electoral timetable, changes to postal and proxy voting, communication and registration, improvements to the nomination process and the extension of the voting franchise to 16- and 17-year-olds, amongst other changes.
- Since October 2023 postal voters must reapply every 3 years, prior to this they just had to refresh their signature every 5 years. The old process only required the team to scan paper forms with the signature on. New applications now require processing individually as they must include full details including verification information (DOB, NINO, name and address). The 3-year cycle will result in a large number of electors needing to reapply every 3 years.
- Prior to January 2024 overseas electors could only remain registered for 15 years. They can now register for life, even if they were never registered to vote before leaving the UK (they have to prove that they resided in the UK either with evidence or attestation). They must also renew their registration and absent votes every 3 years in November.
- In 2014 registration changed to Individual Elector Registration – electors must now register individually and provide verification information (DOB, NINO). Prior to this, registration was mainly completed during the annual canvass where a whole household could be added to one form and only names were required. Thousands of applications are now received each year, either online or on paper.

Other functions

The Electoral Services team are also responsible for other functions which are outside the elections remit such as:

- Updating electoral register database with new properties following information received from street naming and numbering.
- Data mining work – change of address forms, university data, NCC education data, council tax records – to ensure register is as accurate as possible
- Democratic engagement
- Engagement with Parish Councils, particularly regarding casual vacancies
- LGR considerations - timing and planning of shadow elections for the new authority, the Council and Parish Councils data collection and GDPR, combining processes (nominations, counts, postal vote opening etc), IT

contract (different authorities use different systems) and all associated work with LGR which is currently unknown but expected to be substantial.

- Polling district and polling place reviews
- Parliamentary boundary reviews
- Local government boundary reviews
- Annual Canvass which includes contacting every property in the borough (53,000+), including household (door knock) canvass and employment of canvassing team, followed by publication of the revised register on 1 December
- Register sale and supply
- Community Governance Review was concluded in 2024 with a pending review. Following the LGR announcement this now must be reconsidered to potentially include the south of the Borough with the potential to establish town or parish councils in the unparished areas.

Land Charges

In May 2024 part of the land charges search (the LLC1 element) was migrated to His Majesty's Land Registry ('HMLR'). Early in the process it was thought that this would reduce the amount of work, but the Council are still required to register all charges, which are uploaded to HMLR and still need to process and respond to all Con29 searches. As well as full searches there are still a high number of personal searches and other searches submitted through FOI.

The table shows below shows an increase in the number of searches since the migration to HMLR.

	Official Searches	Personal Searches	TOTAL
April 2023 – March 2024	373	1,604	1,977
April 2024 – March 2025	396	2,001	2,397
April 2025 – March 2026 (estimated)	420	2,150	2,570

The cross working that was envisaged has not worked in this team. Capacity is very limited; the most efficient way of working is for staff to focus on and manage their own specific areas of work. At election time and during annual canvass the two Elections Officers have no capacity to support land charges work and consequently the Land Charges Officer has little time to support election processes.

There is little resilience in this area with there being one Land Charges Officer, it would be difficult to cover it should the Officer take leave or leave the Council. HMLR have expressed concern that the Land Charges Officer is the only member of staff providing this function and if they are unavailable, it will not be covered.

HMLR rate the service provided to them based on the timeliness of recording charges and the quality of data supplied. The Council is currently a gold ranked local authority due to the hard work of the Land Charges Officer. However, when they are on leave there is no-one available due to capacity to oversee their work, to ensure this level of service continues (and for the Council to continue its gold star

ranking) the Land Charges Officer requires support which the proposed restructure should achieve.

To reflect the specialist knowledge required by the Land Charges Officer the post was reviewed under Job Evaluation and increased from Scale 5 to Scale 6. A permanent Support Officer would assist the Land Charges Officer in day to day work but the more technical queries and liaison with HMLR would remain with the Land Charges Officer.

Future Vision

The Electoral and Land Charges purpose statement is to support the Council in ensuring that all aspects of registration, elections and Land Charges are in accordance with all relevant legislation, we achieve the Council's corporate objectives for the local community.

- 1) To make the most effective use of service resources and to provide a quality, comprehensive and value for money Electoral and Land Charges service to meet the existing and future demands.
- 2) To be able to offer more skilled cover across both functions, to be self-sufficient where possible and using our skills and knowledge in a timely and proactive manner where they can add most value, so that the service can effectively and proactively meet service needs.
- 3) To have a resilient service, with increased ability and availability.

The proposals within this restructure document are designed to optimise the Electoral and Land Charges Services structure as effectively as possible.

Measures to avoid or minimise disruption

Job Evaluations

The proposed new post has been reviewed under job evaluation.

Staff Consultation

During the consultation period, an employee is entitled to challenge the decision regarding which post(s) they are deemed to be comparable with or not. Any challenges should be submitted in writing to the Head of Legal Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer) within the first 10 working days of the consultation period, in order to give adequate time for consideration and to make any alterations to the proposals. Consultation will not end until after the challenge has been considered and the outcome communicated in writing to all affected employees (as a successful challenge may result in changes in the posts available to other employees).

Working Arrangements

The working hours for all posts will be discussed on a one-to-one basis to ensure sufficient office cover to meet business needs under the proposed new structure.

Selection Process

The Recruitment and Selection Procedure states 'Normally all permanent vacancies are advertised externally and internally. Where however, it is considered appropriate, a position may be advertised for internal applicants only.'

The proposal is for the temporary role to be advertised internally to avoid a lengthy and costly recruitment exercise, to ensure that applicants already have a good understanding of the Council and the to ensure succession planning.

Where a job is to be advertised for internal applicants only, the unions must be consulted by the Human Resources Division prior to the advert being placed, and one of the following conditions must apply:

- The restructuring of a Directorate;
- The redeployment of employees (i.e. ill health, redundancy);
- Another employee (temporary or permanent) has effectively covered the post for a considerable period of time and the necessary trade union consideration has been given to the circumstances;
- The appointment can be filled directly and the unions have been contacted and are in agreement.

Subject to obtaining Union approval the intention would be to advertise to internal applicants only.

BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Directorate	Monitoring Officer Director
Division	Legal and Elections
Post No & Job Title:	Electoral Services and Land Charges Support Officer
Grade:	Grade 5
Responsible to:	Senior Electoral Services/Land Charges Officer
Responsible for:	None
Main purpose of the job	<p>To assist the Electoral Services Team with the registration of electors, applications absent votes and the organisation and administration of elections.</p> <p>To assist in the provision of an efficient Land Charges Service in accordance with agreed policies.</p>

Main Duties and Responsibilities:**Electoral Registration/Elections**

1. To assist the Electoral Services Team with the effective and efficient delivery of the electoral registration process, annual canvass, all elections, referenda and periodic reviews.
2. To undertake day-to-day electoral registration processes to maintain an accurate register of electors, including the processing and determination of new applications, requests for documentary evidence and the removal of ineligible electors.
3. To process and determine absent vote applications, requesting documentary evidence if required, and rejecting applications that do not meet the specified requirements.
4. To use data from available sources, including council tax and education records, to identify potential electors and invite them to register. Also use those records to identify electors who are no longer eligible and reviewing their registration.
5. To prepare the contents of ballot boxes for elections.
6. To assist with the opening of postal ballot papers.

7. To arrange and confirm bookings of polling station and count venues for all elections.
8. To audit all stationery, equipment and supplies necessary for elections.
9. To contribute to the review of polling stations and consider ways of improving facilities for voters with disabilities.
10. To provide assistance to councillors, candidates, agents, government officials, senior officers, other Council employees, external organisations and members of the public in person, over the phone or via email.
11. To keep informed and up to date with developments within the electoral services area and with new laws and legislation relevant to the service.

Land Charges

12. To be directly responsible for the accuracy and verification of completed searches prior to return to the originator, ensuring that they are returned in accordance with prescribed procedures and required timescales.
13. To register and maintain comprehensive records relating to the Land Charges Register, both data entry and ensuring the accuracy of associated spatial data sets is maintained.
14. To request and interpret data held by internal departments and external bodies in order to compile and provide an accurate and up to date search result.
15. To accurately calculate required fees, then record and monitor the income received for local Land Charges searches. To also include raising purchase orders, confidentially processing telephone payments and chasing late payments and outstanding fees.
16. To respond to correspondence and enquiries from search agencies, solicitors, conveyancers, officers and members of the public either by telephone, email or face to face.
17. To refer searches of an unusual or contentious nature to a solicitor for guidance and verification.

General

18. To attend training covering all aspects of the duties.
19. To comply with the statutory provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
20. To ensure that confidentiality is respected and maintained at all times in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

21. To carry out any other duties which are within the scope and grading of the post which could also be requested by the Head of Service or Electoral Services Manager.

DESIGNATED CAR USER

A designated car user status has not been attached to this post.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Duties may include attendance at evening meetings and work outside normal office hours.

RESTRICTIONS

This is not a politically restricted post.

This post is not subject to exemption with reference to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

NOTE

The above job description sets out the main responsibilities of Post No ?- Title but should not be regarded as an exhaustive list of the duties that may be required. As duties and responsibilities change and develop the job description will be reviewed and be subject to amendment in consultation with the post holder during the Personal Development Review process.

All employees are expected to maintain a high standard of service delivery and to uphold the Council's policies in accordance with equality and diversity standards, and health and safety standards, and to participate in training activities necessary to their job.

	Name	Signature	Date
Job description written by:			
Job description authorised by:			

Date of issue:

Additional notes for JE/HR. JGRID

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ELECTORAL SERVICES/LAND CHARGES SUPPORT OFFICER

	Requirements	E/D	Measurement
Personal Skills	• Clear understanding of IT systems including Microsoft Office	E	1, 2
	• Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written	E	1, 2
	• Ability to use tact when dealing with the public	E	1, 2
	• Ability to work with a range of groups and individuals	E	1, 2
	• Ability to work under pressure	E	1, 2
	• Ability to make decisions and show initiative	E	1, 2
	• Ability to work to tight deadlines	E	1, 2
Experience	• Working in electoral registration and elections	D	1, 2
	• Working in a Local Land Charges Service	D	1, 2
	• Experience of working in a customer service environment	E	1, 2
Attainment/Qualifications	• Maths and English GCSE at Grade C/4 or above or equivalent	E	1, 2
	• Willingness to complete the AEA Foundation Course in Electoral Administration	E	1, 2
	• Willingness to attend training on Local Land Charges	E	1, 2
Knowledge	• Basic office procedures and practices	E	1, 2
	• Local authority practices and procedures	D	1, 2
Special Requirements	• Able to work outside normal office hours	E	1, 2
	• Possession of a full driving licence and access to vehicle	D	1, 3
Car Allowance	• Occasional		

Measurement: 1. From application form
2. At interview

3. Documentary evidence

	Name	Signature	Date
Person specification written by:			___/___/___
Person specification agreed by			___/___/___

Additional notes for JE/HR.
LAE21 Posts