

22 October 2014		ITEM: 5
Council		
Tribute to Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray		
Wards and communities affected: Aveley & Uplands	Key Decision: Not applicable	
Report of: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive		
Accountable Head of Service: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal & Democratic Services		
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report requests the Council to pay tribute to Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray, who sadly passed away on 24 September 2014.

The report also includes a proposed timetable that has been prepared by the Returning Officer for a by-election to be held.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Members be invited to pay tribute to Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 On 25 September 2014, Thurrock Council was deeply saddened to learn that Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray had passed away.

2.2 Councillor O’Keeffe-Ray was first elected to the Council on 22 May 2014, where she represented the Aveley and Uplands Ward.

2.3 At the Annual Meeting of the Council, Councillor O’Keeffe-Ray was appointed as a member of the Children’s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In addition, she was appointed as a substitute member of Corporate Parenting Committee.

2.4 All Members are invited to pay tribute to Councillor O’Keeffe-Ray.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Council should formally pay tribute to Councillor O’Keeffe-Ray.
- 3.2 It is traditional for the by-election caused by the death of a councillor to not be called until after the funeral has taken place. At the time of writing this report no date had been confirmed for the funeral of Councillor O’Keeffe-Ray, although the indications are that it will be held towards the end of October. The Returning Officer has advised that he intends to publish a Notice of Vacancy at the end of October, or on the day following the funeral if that is earlier and has prepared proposed timetables for a by-election to be held on either 4 or 11 December 2014, which are attached at **Appendix 1** to the report. He will exercise some discretion around the dates if the funeral is scheduled for a day or two into November.
- 3.3 Following the Notice of Vacancy being published, the by-election can be triggered by any two electors of Thurrock requesting in writing to the Proper Officer that the by-election be held. The timetables assume that this is done within a week of the vacancy being formally advertised. If no written request were to be received, the seat would remain vacant until it is next contested in May 2018
- 3.4 Should a by-election be called and subsequently arranged in line with either proposed timetable, the Chief Executive has advised that a pre-election period will be observed that may see some formal meetings of the Council being cancelled. The pre-election period would commence with the publication of the Notice of Election and guidance for Members and Officers is available on the Council’s intranet. Having so recently had a full pre-election period for the by-election in West Thurrock and South Stifford, officers will carefully consider how best to facilitate the efficient operation of the council under these circumstances in the lead-in to setting the budget in February and will advise members accordingly.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Council should be afforded the opportunity to formally pay tribute to Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 No consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

The costs associated with a by-election have not been explicitly budgeted for at this stage, but will be managed as part of the Councils overall expenditure.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Deputy Head of Legal & Democratic Services

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation contained within this report.

However, a by-election can only be called after two local government electors have requested an election to take place. The electors may be from within the borough and not just from the ward in question. If a request is received before the notice of vacancy is published, this will trigger the statutory period of 35 working days to hold the election.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development & Equalities Manager

There are no implications arising from this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – proposed timetable for a by-election in the Aveley and Uplands Ward

Report Author:

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Legal & Democratic Services