

**To the Chair and Members of the  
ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL CANVASS UPDATE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report provides an update to Members on a number of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors Annual Canvass.

**EXEMPT REPORT**

2. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. The Committee is asked to approve the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

**2017 Annual Canvass – present 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

4. The annual canvass commenced in August 2017, at that point there were 137,706 properties in Doncaster and an electorate of 225,595. We received 79,144 (57.51%) responses to the initial Household Enquiry Form (HEF) without any prompting. Those responses came via the internet, post, text or telephone. A total of 58,562 HEF reminders were issued in September then a further 37,344 2<sup>nd</sup> stage reminders were issued in October. During September to November canvassers were out door knocking the remaining outstanding non-responding properties. To date we have received a total of 107,678 (78.20%) responses. However, canvassing is still ongoing to encourage response and registration.
5. Throughout the canvass 13,073 'Invitation to Register' (ITR) forms for new applicants have been issued, these include any electors who may have moved. There are also 7,712 electors who we are currently investigating to ensure they should be removed from the register and 1,305 electors that are either with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) awaiting verification or which we are trying to obtain further information for, in order to get them on the electoral register.
6. We will be doing what we can to encourage all of the above to turn into actual verified electors by doing a telephone canvass and personal visits to any non-responding HEF and ITR forms and processing the information instantly and sending it to DWP for verification. Any queries returned from DWP will be investigated quickly to try and turn them to a verified elector.

7. A full breakdown by return method in comparison to 2015 and 2016 can be found at appendix A of this report.
8. To help increase the response to the annual canvass and increase the number of electors on the register Electoral Services are currently being proactive by:

#### **Telephone Canvassing**

Due to the success of last year we are undertaking a Telephone Canvass alongside the door knock canvass. This enables us to contact those hard to reach areas/electors. We are now focussing on an ITR canvass to chase up the non-responding electors to try and obtain the information there and then over the phone; we also have a dedicated phone line for electors to call us back with their information should they not have it to hand.

#### **Care Homes & HMO's**

We have dedicated Canvass Team Leaders which are canvassing every care home and housing with multiple occupancies (HMO) within the borough by arranging an appointment with the Care Manager and/or Building Manager to build up a close working relationship to ensure we are kept up to date on the frequent residential changes.

#### **Targeting hard to reach/unapproachable areas**

Where necessary extra support and time has been given to selective areas such as foreign nationals that may not understand how to complete the form. SLHD have provided access to high rise flats and buildings. We have also targeted hard to reach areas by telephone.

#### **School/Colleges**

We are campaigning within Schools and Colleges through their social media links by providing schools with adverts and information to put on their social media to try and increase the number of attainers ready for when they reach voting age. We currently have approx. 2,355 on the register.

#### **Social Media**

Social media updates are sent out via facebook and twitter through 'My Doncaster' pages to provide information to Doncaster residents from the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office and encouraging them to respond to the HEF and register online.

9. The work undertaken during the annual canvass will contribute to the annual Electoral Register that will be published on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. There are comprehensive statutory provisions covering the delivery of electoral registration activity.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. Cabinet Office are continuing to supply funding for electoral registration activity.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Previous Elections and Democratic Structures Committee reports

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### HEF return breakdown by method in comparison to 2015 and 2016

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