

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

**LOCAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS –
6TH MAY 2010 – EVALUATION REPORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Local and Parliamentary Elections took place on the 6th May 2010. The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the elections along with an opportunity for members to discuss issues arising from them. Any issues identified at the meeting will be incorporated into Service Development Plans as part of ongoing improvement.

RECOMMENDATION

2. The Committee is asked to note the report and make any additional comments it wishes to make in relation to the contents.

BACKGROUND

3. As reported previously the delays which had arisen with the implementation of amendments to the European Parliamentary Election Regulations and the Returning Officers Fees and Charges Order were avoided and planning and preparation for the elections went more smoothly. Complexities did arise however from the timing of the announcement of the Parliamentary Election and its significantly shorter timetable.
4. One consequence of the differing timetables was a decision to issue postal votes separately to maximise the time available the time available for preparation and issue as well as allowing the maximum time for voters to be able to return and complete their ballot papers. As the number of postal voters in Doncaster has now risen to approximately 65,000 this meant issuing around 130,000 packs in total. In total approximately 82% of postal votes were returned for the two elections which is above the more usual return of around 60%. This increase will be largely attributable to the Parliamentary election and is likely to return to the levels normally expected next year when only Local Elections are expected.

5. Inevitably particularly where large volumes of additional mail are despatched and delivered over a short period there were instances where problems were reported mainly of packs lost or undelivered in the post. However the number of problems reported was very small and even having made allowances for cases where the voter did not report the problem it is estimated that 99.5% of postal votes were delivered successfully.
6. The Elections in 2006 are now established as a benchmark year as the first year following the electoral pilots and the growth in postal voting that a baseline for turnout can be measured. Since that time turnout has been around 35%. The increased level of turnout that is traditionally seen at Parliamentary elections means that it will not be possible to make a direct comparison. However the turnout was 58.5% which is a slight increase on the turnout for the last Parliamentary Election of 53.5%.
7. The opening of postal votes and the operation of polling stations operated generally smoothly. Checks of the personal identifiers on postal votes were undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements with checks on personal identifiers being completed on 99% of postal votes. The statutory requirement is to carry out checks on 20% of postal votes returned each day.
8. The Counts for the Parliamentary Election held on Thursday the 6th May and the Local Election held on Friday 7th May 2010 both operated successfully with results being declared within the anticipated timescales
9. The delivery of the election is a major project which is delivered by a small core team with support from a number of other areas and individual employees who undertake various duties without which this complex undertaking could not take place. The tight and strict statutory timetable create add to the complexities of the project and this year's elections were further complicated by having two elections with differing voting systems.
10. The results for both elections have been published on the Council's website and are attached as appendix A for the information of members.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11. The elections are a statutory duty and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The primary legislation for the conduct of elections is the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), with specific provisions for each type of election being contained in The

Parliamentary Elections Rules and the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 2006. These regulations set detailed requirements for the conduct of the elections subject to the requirements of primary legislation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The cost of the Local election is met by the Council whilst funding for the Parliamentary Election is met by the Government. The combination of the elections and the sharing of costs will reduce the overall cost burden of the elections to both the Council and the Government. Provision has been made within the 2010 budget for the cost of the Local election.

CONCLUSION

14. The Elections are considered to have been undertaken successfully and positive feedback has already been received from a number of candidates and their agents.

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTRIBUTORS

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

File – Local Elections – 6th May 2010;
Election Results

**JOHANNA MILLER
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND
RETURNING OFFICER**

APPENDIX A - SCHEDULE OF RESULTS

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Name of Member Elected</u>
Adwick	John Mounsey
Armthorpe	Chris McGuinness
Askern Spa	Ros Jones
Balby	Andrew Bosmans
Bentley	Stuart Hardy
Bessacarr and Cantley	Eric Victor Tatton-Kelly
Central	John McHale
Conisbrough and Denaby	Sandra Mary Holland
Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall and Barnby Dun	David Andrew Nevett
Edlington and Warmsworth	Elsie Butler
Finningley	Richard Allan Jones
Great North Road	Kevin Rodgers
Hatfield	Linda Curran
Mexborough	David Holland
Rossington	Barry Johnson
Sprotbrough	Doreen Woodhouse
Stainforth and Moorends	Barbara Ann Hedley
Thorne	Eddie Dobbs
Torne Valley	Patricia Bartlett
Town Moor	Jane Kidd
Wheatley	Maira Hood
<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Name of M.P.</u>
Doncaster Central	Rosie Winterton
Doncaster North	Ed Milliband
Don Valley	Caroline Flint