

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

22ND FEBRUARY, 2011

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the MANSION HOUSE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Chair – Councillor Moira Hood  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Doreen Woodhouse

Councillors Bob Ford, Beryl Harrison, Ken Keegan, Ray Mullis and Kevin Rodgers

APOLOGIES:-

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Bissett, Marilyn Green, Cliff Hampson and Ken Knight.

10. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

11. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH NOVEMBER, 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November, 2010, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. COMBINED LOCAL (DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCIL) ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM ON VOTING SYSTEM AT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS – 5TH MAY 2011: PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report which provided information on progress to date in the preparations for the forthcoming combined District and Parish Council Elections and Referendum on the Voting System to be used at Parliamentary General Elections, to be held on 5th May 2011.

With regard to the Referendum on the Voting System to be used at Parliamentary Elections, the Head of Elections and Democratic Renewal explained that voters would be asked to choose between the current 'first past the post' system and an alternative voting system, which was similar to the system used for the Mayoral Election, but differed in that voters were asked to indicate their preferences for every candidate standing in the Election.

It was confirmed that it was intended that the verification of the 3 ballot papers and the counting of votes for the District Election would take place on the night of Thursday 5th May following the close of polls. The count for the Parish Elections would be undertaken on the morning of Friday 6th May 2011, followed by the count for the Referendum, which had to commence at 4.00 p.m. on 6th May 2011.

In response to a question, the Head of Elections advised that it was intended to use a single ballot box at polling stations for the 3 ballot papers. This would minimise confusion for voters on the day, and also avoid the potential logistical problems of distributing multiple ballot boxes to Stations.

During discussion on the proposed commencement time for the counting of votes for the Parish Council Elections, the Head of Elections explained that by starting this count on the morning of Friday 6th May, it would make the most efficient use of the time available prior to the commencement of the Referendum count at 4.00 p.m. later that day.

In reply to a further question, the Committee was advised that it was proposed to issue the postal votes in separate envelopes for each of the Elections and the Referendum, rather than using a single envelope for all of the papers and instructions, in order to minimise confusion for voters and lessen the risk of ballot papers being invalidated.

After the Head of Elections had confirmed that the necessary financial and staffing resources were in place to deliver the Local Elections, it was

RESOLVED to note the progress to date with the preparations for the combined District and Parish Council Elections and Referendum on the Voting System to be used at Parliamentary General Elections, to be held on 5th May 2011.

### 13. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES/TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered a report which outlined proposed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Panels as proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. These proposals had previously been considered and supported by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 16th February 2011, from a probity perspective.

In presenting the report, the Scrutiny Manager summarised the proposed revisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (OSPR), which were aimed at streamlining processes and improving openness and accountability, and also reflected recent legislative changes and best practice. In particular, the Scrutiny Manager drew Members' attention to suggested changes to the Rules pertaining to:

- The establishment of, and appointment to, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Management Committee;
- The Call-in Group; and

- The implementation of called-in decisions.

Arising from a query by a Member, the Scrutiny Manager drew attention to an error in OSPR 3 (b) – Chairing Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Panels, and confirmed that the words ‘Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee’ should be shown as being a proposed deletion (struck through), so that the revised Rule would read:-

‘The Full Council will appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair of standing Overview and Scrutiny Panels at all times ensuring that not all Chairs and Vice-Chairs are drawn from the same party group.’

After the Scrutiny Manager had answered a range of questions on the proposed revisions, and had explained that there might be a need to review the Rules again in the future if the Localism Bill impacted on any areas, it was

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the revised Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendices A & B of the report, be approved.

14. FREEDOM OF ENTRY CONSIDERATION – 219 SQUADRON, 150 (YORKSHIRE) TRANSPORT REGIMENT, ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS (V)

The Committee considered a report which proposed the bestowing of the Freedom of Entry on 219 Squadron, 150 (Yorkshire) Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps (V) as part of the Armed Forces Day Celebrations in Doncaster on Saturday 25th June 2011 (Option C of report).

In presenting the report, the Democratic Services Manager explained that the Royal Logistics Corps had been based in Doncaster since 1919 and had given support to the Authority and residents of the Borough, during times of conflict and peacetime, over many years. He stated that the conferring of the Freedom of Entry on the Corps would serve to acknowledge the service given to the Borough by 219 Squadron and would be consistent with the honours bestowed upon similar squadrons elsewhere in the Country.

In supporting this proposal, Members agreed that the most cost effective option for hosting the ceremony would be to bestow the honour upon 219 Squadron as part of the Armed Forces Day Celebrations in Doncaster on Saturday 25th June 2011 (Option C of the report) and noted that this would also allow the public and families of Servicemen and women the opportunity to view the ceremony.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the honour of Freedom of Entry be bestowed upon 219 Squadron, 150 (Yorkshire) Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps (V) as part of the Armed Forces Day Celebrations in Doncaster on Saturday 25th June 2011 (Option C of report).