

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

11TH MARCH, 2014

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Moira Hood
Vice-Chair - Councillor Kevin Rodgers

Councillors, Phil Cole, Nuala Fennelly, Bill Mordue, Jane Nightingale and Sue Wilkinson

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Patricia Bartlett, Deborah Hutchinson and Hilary McNamee.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

No declarations were made at the meeting.

18. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE HELD ON 26TH NOVEMBER 2013 AND 28TH JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee held on 26th November 2013 and 28th January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19. ELECTORAL SERVICES - UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES

The Committee received a report on key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team. The report focussed on:-

- Individual Electoral Registration (IER);
- Register of Electors annual canvass; and
- Preparations for the European and Local Government Elections on 22 May 2014

Individual Electoral Registration

It was noted that IER data would be used when publishing the next annual Register of Electors for use in the General Election and the all-out Borough Council elections in 2015.

Register of Electors Annual Canvass

The Register published on 17 February 2014 contained 221,990 entries; a breakdown by ward was appended to the report. The registration return was 88.6% compared with an 86% return the previous year. It was anticipated that the number of absent vote registrations would increase from the current level of 55,085 as an additional 19,586 electors had requested a postal vote application form; past experience had shown that additional requests for postal votes had resulted in a 10% take up.

Preparations for the European and Local Government Elections on 22 May 2014

Members were reminded that the Electoral Commission had selected Doncaster as one of the authorities to provide additional information to evidence compliance with their performance standards as and when requested. One return has been made and confirmation received that the Council was meeting the required standard.

New Regulations affecting postal votes in UK Parliamentary and local elections would come into force on 22 May. Notable changes included:

- Removal of the current restriction to wait until 11 days before the election before issuing postal votes;
- In the case of a rejected postal vote, within three months of the poll, provide the individual concerned with reasons for the rejection.

It was noted that the work programme for delivering the election was on schedule.

In answer to questions asked by Members, the Committee were informed that:

- A review of polling stations would be undertaken following the Ward Boundary Review;
- The count for the European Election would take place on Sunday 25th May 2014;
- Where Polling Stations had to be moved, Schools would be requested to highlight in newsletters to parents

RESOLVED that the report be noted

20. APPRECIATION

On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Kevin Rogers paid tribute to the Chair, Moira Hood who would be stepping down as a Councillor in May for the work she had done for the Council and in particular the work she had done for this Committee.

Councillor Hood thanked Members and Officers for the support she had received during her time as an Elected Member.