

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

**EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
HELD ON 22nd MAY 2014 AND PROGRESS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF
INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The European and Local Government Elections took place on the 22 May 2014; the purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the election and to highlight the key processes for improvement to be incorporated into the 2015 elections project plan. Any additional issues identified at this meeting will be incorporated into Service Development Plans for future elections.
2. This report also updates members on the progress of local data matching for the transition to Individual Electoral Registration.

EXEMPT REPORT

3. Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

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

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. Voters receive the information they need, in an accessible format and within time for them to cast their vote, receive a high-quality service and have confidence that their vote will be counted in the way they intended.
6. People who want to stand for election receive all the information they need to take part.
7. Candidates have confidence that the process is well-managed, and have confidence in the results.
8. Each eligible individual will have the right and responsibility to register themselves to vote, rather than being dependent on another member of the household.

BACKGROUND

Election Review

9. A report on the Results of the Borough Council and European Parliamentary Elections held on 22 May 2014 went to Council on 13 June 2014 and all Members were invited to contribute by contacting the Electoral Services Manager with any comments by the end of June 2014.
10. The Electoral Commission analysed our evidence of performance against their performance indicators and we met the standard across all areas.
11. Election planning and administration must be a continuous on-going development process, year on year and throughout the year. A combined poll demands a significant amount of planning and is a huge logistical exercise, particularly in the face of the new electoral arrangements next year resulting in a Parliamentary election combined with all out ward elections and all out parish elections.
12. A review of the May 2014 elections has begun and the key processes for improvement for the combined 2015 elections are shown at **Appendix 1**.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

13. In readiness for the introduction of IER, several initiatives were introduced at the annual canvass to ensure the register was as accurate as possible. This worked well and the key achievements were;
 - the registration return achieved was 88.6% compared to 86% the previous year
 - A total of 81,000 forms were processed by the team of which 43,550 had changed details, compared to the previous year when 78,309 were processed of which 27,882 had changed details.
 - the number of forms collected on the doorstep by canvassers was 25,912 which was an increase of 6,400 forms
 - the number of European registrations increased to 4,796 from 3,157
14. The confirmation live run result, received on 4th July, showed an 82% match. Local data matching with the Council Tax National Fraud Initiative data and the Customer Relations Management system data matched an additional 23,278 electors and we now have a confirmation match of 93.86%.
15. This is currently the highest match in the region and we will shortly be sending out 210,546 confirmation letters and 10,674 invitations to register.
16. Invitations to register ask the resident to make an individual application and supply their name, address, date of birth and national insurance number. The application can be made in hard copy or online. People will be reminded more than once and if they still do not respond will be visited by a canvasser.
17. In addition 19,936 household enquiry forms (HEF) will be sent to households where no one is registered and where electors were carried forward at the end

of the canvass in February. Electors will need to be written to at least twice and visited by a canvasser if they do not respond.

18. Electors who do not supply the relevant details will be automatically carried forward from the register published in 2014 to the following year to enable the maximum number of electors to vote in the General and Local Elections in May 2015.

19. However, it is important to note the postal or proxy vote will be deleted for anyone who has been carried forward and they will need to go to the polling station to vote in 2015 unless they register individually and complete a new postal vote application.

20. Electors who do not match automatically will be reminded in 2014 and 2015 to provide the relevant information and will have until December 2015 to register under the new system when anyone who has not registered to vote individually before December 2015 will be removed from the register.

Next steps

21. In December 2014 the new register will include all electors confirmed under IER and those electors automatically carried forward.

22. In January to March 2015 electoral services will carry out targeted activity to invite further missing electors and those who may have moved, to update their registration and also write to people encouraging those not on the register to apply.

23. From 2015 (and in future years) a two stage process will be in operation. The first stage will be for the ERO to send a Household Enquiry Form (HEF) to every residential property. Any new electors identified by this will then be followed up individually by the ERO.

24. In addition, new electors will be able to register on an individual basis throughout the year under rolling registration; non-confirmed electors will need to be written to at least twice and visited by a canvasser if they do not respond.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

25. This report is primarily for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

26.	Priority	Implications
	We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.	By ensuring the necessary arrangements in place to deliver well-run elections and improving our reputation by meeting the Electoral Commissions Performance Standards.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

27. Sufficient resources will need to be made available to run the combined elections 2015 and to implement individual registration in order to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duties detailed above.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Compliance with;

- the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006
- the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002
- Electoral Administration Act 2006

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The costs of the combined elections will be shared with the Home Office where applicable.

30. The Cabinet Office has provided grant funding toward the transition to IER.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

31. As part of the legislative process, an impact assessment of the introduction of IER was undertaken, including an equality impact assessment. The assessment states that the move away from a household electoral registration system should have an overall positive impact on equality

BACKGROUND PAPERS

32. Council report on 13 June 2014
Elections and Democratic Structures Committee report on 26 November 2013.

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RETURNING OFFICER/ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER