

To all Members of the

## **ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE**

### **AGENDA**

Notice is given that a Meeting of the above Committee  
is to be held as follows:

**VENUE** Room 007 b - Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU  
**DATE:** Tuesday, 24th November, 2015  
**TIME:** 10.00 am

<b>Items for Discussion:</b>	<b>PageNo.</b>
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.	
3. Declarations of Interest, if any.	
4. Minutes of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee Meeting held on 7th July 2015	1 - 10
<b>A. A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.</b>	
5. Revisions to the Council's Constitution	11 - 18
6. Annual Canvass Update (Verbal Update)	

**Jo Miller**  
**Chief Executive**

Issued on: Monday, 16 November, 2015

Senior Governance Officer  
for this meeting:

Jonathan Goodrum  
Te. 01302 736709

7. Evaluation of the Tickhill Neighbourhood Planning Referendum held 19 - 22 on 23rd July 2015
  
8. Parliamentary Review  
*(Verbal Update)*

**MEMBERS OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES  
COMMITTEE (11)**

**Chair** – Councillor Phil Cole

**Vice-Chair** – Councillor James Hart

Councillor Sean Gibbons	Councillor Pat Haith
Councillor Charlie Hogarth	Councillor Majid Khan
Councillor John McHale	Councillor Jane Nightingale
Councillor Kevin Rodgers	Councillor Clive Stone
Councillor Sue Wilkinson	

# Agenda Item 4.

## DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

7TH JULY, 2015

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 7TH JULY, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

#### PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Phil Cole  
Vice-Chair - Councillor James Hart

Councillors Pat Haith, Charlie Hogarth, Majid Khan, John McHale, Jane Nightingale and Sue Wilkinson.

#### APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Gibbons and Kevin Rodgers.

#### 1. PERSONAL REFERENCE

In opening the meeting, the Chair stated that he wished to place on record his thanks to Councillor Jane Nightingale for her past work as the former Chair of this Committee. He also thanked all of the former Members of the Committee for the contributions they had made to the work of the Committee during 2014/15, namely Councillors John Cooke, Nuala Fennelly, Deborah Hutchinson, Hilary McNamee and Dave Shaw. The Chair concluded by welcoming Councillor James Hart, the Committee's new Vice-Chair, to the meeting.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

No declarations were made at the meeting.

#### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2015

With regard to Minute Number 13 (Electoral Services Update on Key Issues Report) from the meeting held on 17th March 2015, Councillor Charlie Hogarth referred to the seventh bullet pointed paragraph on page 3 and pointed out that this should, in fact, read 'Councillor Charlie Hogarth queried whether the street 'Lawn Garth' could be moved from NH Polling District into the Polling District NA with **Kirkstone Close**, to vote at the Polling Station on Queens Drive. In response, Trina Barber from the Elections Team confirmed that this query would be looked into as part of the Autumn Canvass.

Subject to the above amendment, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee meeting held on 17th March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 4. ELECTORAL SERVICES UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES REPORT

The Committee received a report which provided an evaluation of the Parliamentary General, Borough Council and Parish Council elections held on 7 May 2015 and highlighted the key processes for improvements to be incorporated into the Elections Project Plan. The report also updated Members on the on-going implementation of Individual Electoral Registration.

##### Evaluation of the Parliamentary General, Borough Council and Parish Council elections held on 7 May 2015

The Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services introduced the report by explaining that feedback from Members on the running of the elections would be welcomed and that this would be taken into account in preparing for future Elections. An internal review had been carried out of the election arrangements and the key recommendations arising from this were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services confirmed that the Elections in Doncaster this year had been the largest combination of polls since 1979. It was reported that, overall, the elections had been successfully delivered, and much of this success was due to the huge efforts of the staff in the Elections Team, with a significant contribution also being made by individuals and teams throughout the Council. It was noted, however, that the combination of polls had stretched the Council's resources and there was some evidence that it had led to some confusion on the part of the electorate. It was therefore likely that senior commentators, including some Chief Executives, would be making representations to the Cabinet Office and others, asking them to limit the number of polls that could be combined on a single day.

The Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services then referred to the review of the May 2015 elections that was being undertaken and summarised the areas identified for improvement together with key recommendations, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, which the Committee was requested to consider and comment on accordingly. Discussion followed, during which Members raised various questions and/or commented on a range of issues in relation to the running of the Elections, as summarised below:-

- Security/integrity – the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services confirmed that some complaints had been received in the run up to the elections in relation to the use of social media, imprints on printed material and emails and content of election material. While these incidents had not in most cases amounted to breaches of any electoral rules, it was nevertheless important to remind individuals of the need to be careful. In response to a question, the Assistant Director advised that the Police were the responsible body for enforcing such matters.

- In response to a question as to whether the computer software used for scanning postal vote statements was able to recognise inconsistencies in people's signatures, the Officers explained that the final decision on any apparent signature anomalies was made by the staff using the scanning software.
- Councillor Pat Haith advised that she was aware of an instance where a voter had been told by the polling station staff on election day that she did not have a vote in relation to the Parish Council elections, instead of the staff explaining to her that the Parish Council elections in that particular area were uncontested, hence the absence of a ballot paper. She asked if staff could be briefed in future to provide clearer guidance to voters in situations such as this. In reply, the Officers suggested that, in future, a notice could be displayed at polling stations in areas where there were uncontested Parish Council elections so that voters were better informed.
- Software performance – Councillor Charlie Hogarth questioned why the functionality and capacity of the eXpress software system was not being fully utilised, as indicated in the report. In reply, the Assistant Director explained that there was scope for training a wider number of staff on the use of the system, and also there was a need to ensure that the Council made full use of the many functions offered by the software.
- Processing/handling of queries - Councillor Charlie Hogarth stated that he was aware that there had been complaints that some people with queries that were unrelated to the elections had been unable to get through to the contact centre around the time of the elections, due to the staff being busy dealing with election calls. In response, the Officers stated that additional agency staff had been brought in to support the Contact Centre staff in receiving election calls, to help minimise any adverse impact this might have on the Centre's ability to handle non-election queries.
- In answer to a question regarding the proposal to look into the feasibility of having a 'postcode checker' facility on the Council's website allowing the electorate to identify their polling station by typing in their postcode, the Officers confirmed that such a system would allow users to enter other address details instead of a postcode if they preferred.
- Councillor John McHale asked whether details of the relevant polling station could be included on the candidates' copies of the Electoral Register. In reply, the Officers confirmed that this could be implemented by the software supplier, with the most practical solution being to show the polling station address on the front page of the Register.

- Councillor Charlie Hogarth referred to apparent inconsistencies in the wording used in the Electoral Register to describe the date listed next to an elector, indicating when they were eligible to vote and he asked whether this could be clarified. In reply, the Officers stated that the software supplier had been requested to correct this anomaly as a system enhancement and undertook to follow this matter up and update Councillor Hogarth accordingly.
- Councillor Sue Wilkinson advised that she was aware that many people had only voted for one candidate in the Borough Council Elections, and wondered if more could be done to make instructions clearer and better inform voters so that everyone was fully aware of how many votes they were entitled to in the respective elections. The Assistant Director explained that messages could be put out on the Council's website but the content of election literature used in polling stations was prescribed and therefore could not be altered by the Council. The Chair felt that the recent transition in Doncaster from an 'elections by thirds' system to all-out elections, with the resultant change from voting for one candidate to 2 or 3 candidates in each ward each time, was one factor that may have contributed to greater confusion amongst voters this time. At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Chris Taylor pointed out that he had noticed that in polling stations where the staff explained to voters how many candidates could be voted for, they tended to place more votes than in those stations where the staff did not provide any explanation.
- Members noted the contents of a hand-out tabled at the meeting (see Appendix 1 to these minutes), which provided a breakdown of the costs of the combined Parliamentary, Local and Parish Elections in May 2015.
- The Chair stated that he wished to place on record this Committee's thanks to all of the staff who had contributed to the successful running of the Elections, particularly those in the Elections Team and the Communications Team, and to the Electoral Services Manager Keith Porter, who had been brought in on a consultancy basis for the duration of the Elections.

#### Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

Members received and noted the contents of a hand-out (see Appendix 2 to these minutes) which summarised the results of the 2014/15 Canvass, which had commenced in September 2014 and outlined how IER had impacted on the number of persons included on the Register. In particular, it was noted that, as of June 2015, there were 3,720 less people registered than in September 2014. However, this figure included deaths and also people who had moved out of the Borough during this period. It was hoped that the Autumn Canvass, together with new publicity, would return a high response rate in boosting new and re-registering individuals. It was also reported that since June 2014, a total of 31,106 applications had been received, of which the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had verified 24,201 and 5,275 were duplicate applications. The Council had verified 816 by local data matching with Council Tax and 79 applications had provided further evidence. It was noted that as of 2nd July 2015, 735 applications remained unverified

and were awaiting evidence or verification from the DWP.

The Officers then answered a range of questions on issues including:-

- the work undertaken in schools to help promote awareness and understanding of electoral registration and the importance of voting amongst young people;
- the correlation between areas of high deprivation in the Borough and a larger proportion of persons who were not registered to vote, and the measures being taken to address this problem;
- the average number of people being added to the Register, which currently stood at approximately 200 per month.

At this point, with the Chair's consent, Mr Ivan Stark addressed the Committee, expressing concern that candidates had been distributing election campaign literature and making door to door visits on Election Day, which he felt was a breach of Election rules and regulations. In reply, the Chair advised Mr Stark that there was no prohibition on Candidates visiting properties on Election Day, but he offered to discuss the matter further with Mr Stark outside of the meeting.

It was then

RESOLVED that, subject to the above comments and actions agreed, the evaluation of the Parliamentary General, Local and Parish Elections held on 7th May 2015 and progress on the on-going implementation of IER be noted.

## Combined Parliamentary Local and Parish election costs 2015

(All costs are gross) Parliamentary costs are not VAT recoverable.

This is not and cannot be totalled completely as invoices are still being processed, the accounts have to be clear within 6 months of the election and return to the election claims unit for them to audit.

The Electoral Claims unit will only provide the actual cost associate with the Parliamentary election the combined budget for all the three constituencies is £237,297.

The Local Budget for the cost of running the election is £269,067 (excluding Staffing costs).

The Parish costs will be proportioned by elector so cost will reflect the number in each contested parish.

### Poll Cards

<b>Printing</b>	<b>Postage</b>
Parliamentary – £4,036.69	Parliamentary – £20,870.20
Local – £4,036.68	Local – £20,870.20
Parish – £4,036.68	Parish – £20,870.18

### Ballot Papers

Parliamentary – £8,029.33
Local – £8,016.07
Parish – £2,783.96

### Postal votes

Parliamentary – £19,344.97
Local – £19,344.97
Parish – £13,513.97

### Postal Vote Postage

<b>Outgoing Postal vote Postage</b>	<b>Incoming postal vote Postage</b>
Parliamentary – £15,402.72	Parliamentary – £3,813.93
Local – £15,402.72	Local – £3,813.93
Parish- £8,929.10	Parish – £2,579.80

### Polling Station costs

£18,718.75 - Schools/Private premises/Community buildings
£9,600 - Portable units

### Polling station Staffing

£94,159 Presiding Officers/Poll Clerks/Inspectors etc.
--

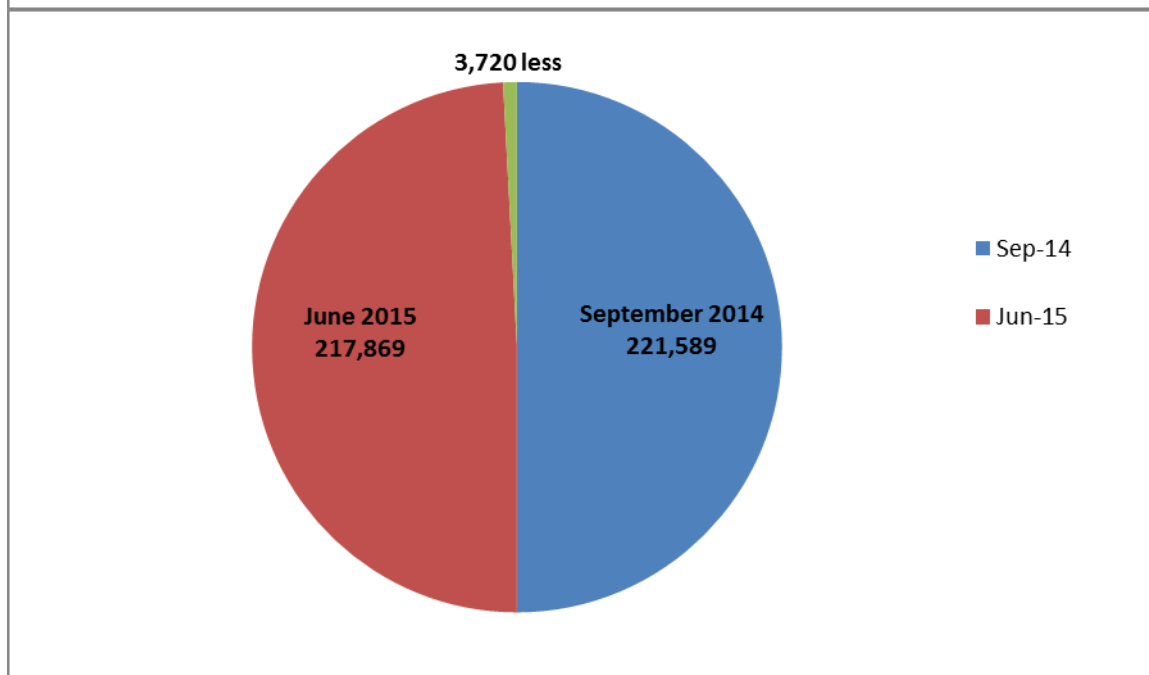
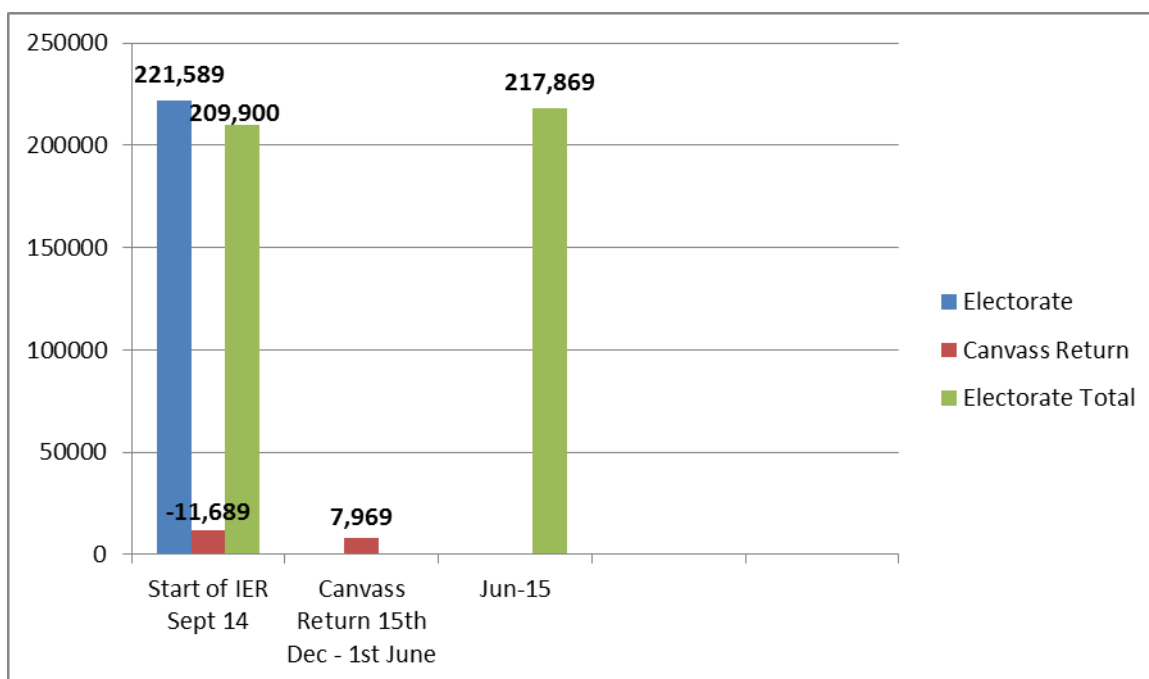


## **Count Costs**

<b><i>Venue</i></b>	<b><i>Staffing</i></b>
Parliamentary -£26,563.80	£23,772.85
Local - £7,380.60	£34,929.15
Parish - £7,137.60	£28,568.50

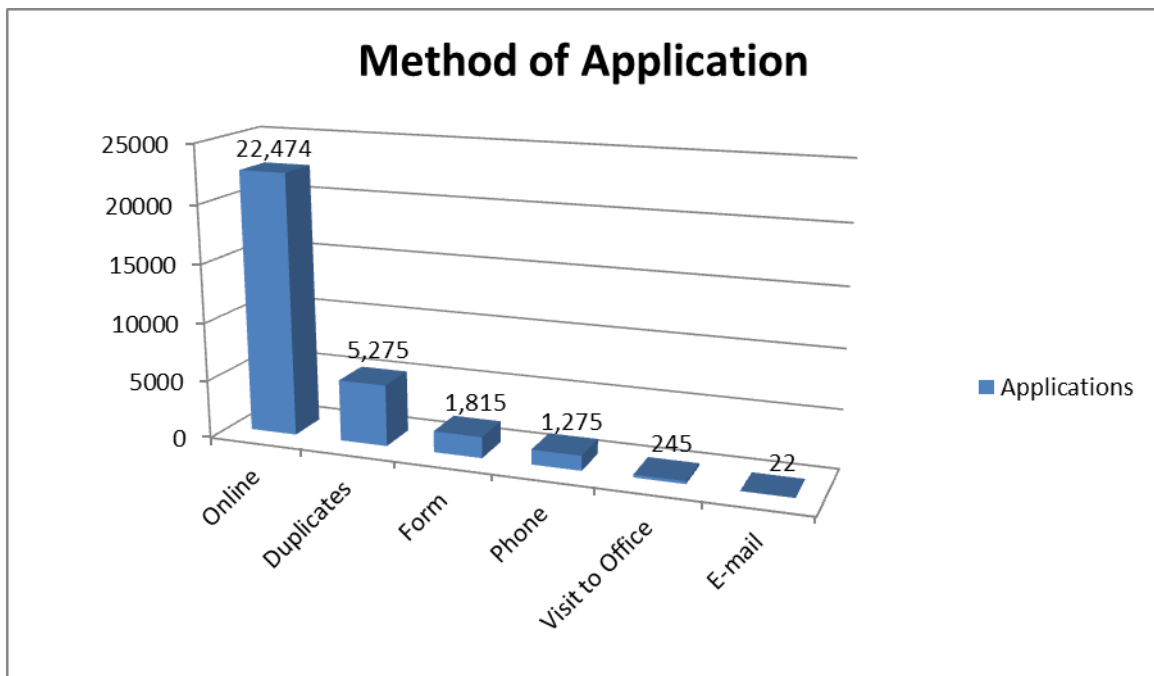
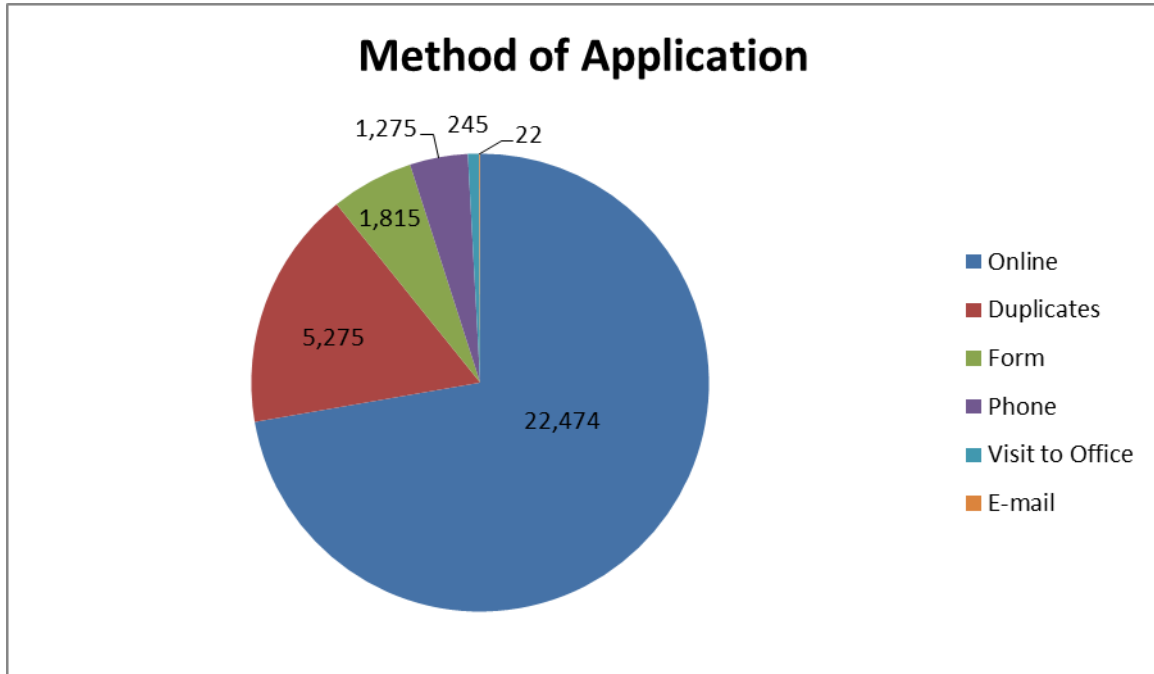
**Individual Electoral Registration (IER) September 2014 – June 2015**

The 2014/15 canvass commenced in September 2014. At that point, there were 133,116 properties in Doncaster and an electorate of 221,589. We received 114,809 responses to the initial Household Enquiry Form [HEF] without any prompting. Those responses came via the internet, post or telephone. A total of 18,307 reminders were subsequently issued. In addition, we also sent canvassers to the door, although not in every case. Approximately 11,689 individuals were removed from the Register as a consequence of a failure to either respond at all or provide the correct information for two consecutive years. We have written to those persons that were removed and invited them to re-register. As a consequence of all of this, 7,969 persons (as at 1st June 2015) had either been re-registered or entered onto the Register for the first time. The electorate now stands at 217,869.



There are now 3,720 less than in September 2014. However, this figure will include deaths and the number of people in which have moved out of the borough. It is hoped that the Autumn Canvass will return a high response rate in boosting new and re-registering individuals.

Since June 2014 we have received a total of 31,106 applications, of which DWP have verified 24,201 and 5,275 were duplicate applications. We verified 816 by local data matching with Council Tax and 79 applications have provided further evidence. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 735 remain unverified and are awaiting evidence or verification from DWP.



This page is intentionally left blank

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

**REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report presents to the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee (EDSC) proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution in response to issues which have arisen since the Constitution was last reviewed. Specifically, these relate to the Council Procedure Rules (Section 1, Part 4 of the Constitution) and the Executive Procedure Rules (Section 4, Part 4 of the Constitution).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. The Committee is requested to consider:
  - a) proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules, as outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report;
  - b) proposed amendments to the Executive Procedure Rules, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and
  - c) a request that Motions by the Public are permitted at Full Council meetings in future (see paragraphs 10 – 13)

and make any necessary recommendations to the Full Council meeting to be held on 26th November 2015.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

3. The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The proposed revisions to Procedure Rules outlined in this report are aimed at ensuring that questions put by members of the public and elected Members at Council and Cabinet meetings are managed effectively and in a fair and consistent manner.

**BACKGROUND**

**Proposed revisions to Council Procedure Rules 13.7 and 15.6**

4. The Constitution sets out the procedure which governs 'Question Time' at Council meetings, and specifically questions on notice from both members of the Public and from Elected Members. Paragraphs 13.7 and 15.6 of Council Procedure Rules state that questions submitted and subsequently published on the Council Summons will be taken as read at the meeting.

5. At its meeting on 24th September 2015, the Council agreed to produce an audio visual recording of future Council meetings which would be available to view via the Council's website. This will commence with effect from the Council meeting to be held on 26th November 2015 and the recording is expected to be made available shortly after this date. In order to ensure that those viewing the recordings are able to follow the proceedings, it is necessary to amend the Council Procedure Rules (CPRs) so that questions on notice are read out at meetings, instead of being "taken as read". This will, in fact, mark a return to previous arrangements, as these particular Rules did historically allow for questions to be read out. It is suggested that the Chair of Council should read out the question as this will both aid the management of the meeting and ensure that the question is read out as printed upon the agenda. Accordingly, the following amendments to the CPRs are therefore proposed (new text is shown in bold italics):

Current CPR wording	Revised CPR wording
<p><b>13. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>13.7 Considering the question at the meeting</b></p> <p>Questions submitted by members of the public and subsequently published on the Council Summons will be taken as read at the meeting. A copy of the intended response from the Mayor, Member of the Executive or relevant Chair of a Regulatory Committee to whom the question is put shall be provided to the questioner at the start of the meeting, to enable them to prepare a supplementary question to ask, if they so wish, with the Chair's permission. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to attend the meeting, a copy of the answer given will be provided to them following the meeting.</p>	<p><b>13. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p><b>13.7 Considering the question at the meeting</b></p> <p><i><b>The Chair will read out the question as it appears upon the agenda.</b></i> A copy of the intended response from the Mayor, Member of the Executive or relevant Chair of a Regulatory Committee to whom the question is put shall be provided to the questioner at the start of the meeting, to enable them to prepare a supplementary question to ask, if they so wish, with the Chair's permission. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to attend the meeting, a copy of the answer given will be provided to them following the meeting.</p>
<p><b>15. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS</b></p> <p><b>15.6 Response</b></p> <p>Every question submitted by a Member and subsequently published on the Council Summons will be taken as read at the meeting and answered without discussion, but the Member to whom it is put may decline to answer it.</p>	<p><b>15. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS</b></p> <p><b>15.6 Response</b></p> <p><i><b>Every question shall be put</b></i> and answered without discussion, but the Member to whom it is put may decline to answer it. A copy of the intended response from the Mayor, Member of the Executive or relevant Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee to whom the question is put shall be provided to</p>

<p>A copy of the intended response from the Mayor, Member of the Executive or relevant Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee to whom the question is put shall be provided to the Member asking the question at the start of the meeting, to enable them to prepare a supplementary question to ask, if they so wish.</p>	<p>the Member asking the question at the start of the meeting, to enable them to prepare a supplementary question to ask, if they so wish.</p> <p><b><i>If a Member who has submitted a written question is unable to attend the meeting, the Chair will read out the question on the Member's behalf, and a copy of the answer given will be provided to the Member following the meeting.</i></b></p>
---	---

### Proposed revisions to Executive Procedure Rules

6. Since 2012, members of the public and Elected Members have been able to ask questions and/or make statements directly to the Mayor at Cabinet meetings in relation to an item on the agenda or on wider Executive functions. This arrangement is covered by Executive Procedure Rule 2.3 (Executive Meeting Agenda), which provides for a period of time not exceeding 20 minutes in total to be allocated for questions from members of the public to the Elected Mayor at each meeting of the Cabinet, i.e. questions **without** notice.
  
7. Whilst the Mayor is keen to engage with the public at Cabinet meetings the current arrangements have given rise to a number of areas that could be improved:
  - Because the questions do not always relate to issues on the Cabinet agenda, and are not submitted in advance, it is often difficult to provide a comprehensive answer, where technical detail or further research is required. This is not helpful for the public seeking a response to their question at the meeting.
  - Lack of notice of questions in advance also means that, where there is ambiguity, there is no opportunity to seek clarity from the questioner over the question or the information being requested prior to the meeting.
  - Receiving questions without notice and which do not relate to the business on the agenda is inconsistent with other Constitutional procedures currently in place, e.g. questions from the public at Council meetings, which must be on notice and public statements at Overview and Scrutiny Panels, which must relate specifically to an item on the agenda. Questions have been received upon matters which either do not relate to the Agenda, or to matters within the influence of the Mayor or Cabinet or on some occasions matters which do not fall within the remit of the Council as a whole.
  
8. For the reasons outlined above, a number of options have been considered in consultation with Mayor Ros Jones, with the aim of ensuring that arrangements at Cabinet meetings are consistent with other processes currently used by the Council and ensure the public receive a more meaningful response to their question. As a result, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the current arrangements:

- Request questions/statements on notice, e.g. no later than 5.00 p.m. of the third working day before the day of the meeting (e.g. with Cabinet currently meeting on Tuesdays, the Cabinet agenda is published no later than 17.00 on Monday and questions must be received no later than 17.00 on Thursday);
- Questions/statements should relate specifically to an item of business on the Cabinet agenda and be limited to a maximum of 100 words;
- One supplementary question without notice will be allowed, at the Chair's discretion, provided that this arises directly out of the original question/statement or reply, and this will be put and answered without discussion.

These new arrangements will need to be reflected in the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Section 4, Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, by the addition of new Rules which are detailed in **Appendix A** to this report.

9. The facility for members of the public to ask questions/make statements at Cabinet Meetings is aimed primarily at providing the public with an opportunity to speak on issues that are to be discussed at Cabinet. This might help with clarification of an issue or understanding of why a proposed course of action is being recommended, for example. Where the public wish to engage with the Elected Mayor on wider Executive issues other than those on Cabinet agendas, there are other existing mechanisms which allow them do this, such as question time at Council meetings, email and other correspondence, deputations, petitions and the Mayor's monthly meetings held throughout the Borough.

### **Request to allow Motions by the Public to the Council**

10. At the Council Meeting held on 24th September 2015, the following question from Mr. D. Wright was put to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:

*"Doncaster Council's Constitution allows for 'Question Time' sessions for public questions at Council meetings.*

*Will the Mayor agree to change the Constitution to also allow 'Motions to Doncaster Council' sessions at Doncaster Council meetings? The procedures could be similar to the 'Question Time' sessions.*

*This will enable Doncaster residents to bring forward positive suggestions directly to the Mayor in front of Doncaster Councillors and to members of the public both in the Council Chamber and by the new audio visual recordings at home."*

11. In her response, Mayor Jones explained that any decision to allow the public to submit Motions to Full Council meetings was not within her power and that this rested with Full Council. Accordingly, she undertook to make this Committee aware of the issue in the first instance. The Mayor did point out to the questioner that there were already numerous ways in which the public could raise issues in a public forum, including:-

- Public 'Question Time' at Council and Cabinet meetings;



- Engaging with the Mayor either by arranging one to one meetings or at the monthly ‘Meet the Mayor’ events, or by email or in writing;
- Making representations to Overview and Scrutiny;
- Using the existing provisions in the Constitution to submit petitions or deputations to the Council.

The Mayor expressed the view that, given the existing wide ranging opportunities for public engagement, the submission of Council Motions was a function that should remain the responsibility of elected representatives. She added that the public could approach their local Ward Members or indeed any Councillor and ask them to consider putting forward a Motion to Full Council.

12. It should be noted that research undertaken by Officers has found no evidence of Motions by the Public being permitted by any other Local Authority. It is generally accepted that the submission of Motions falls solely within the gift of elected members as this enables Council to regulate its own business to ensure that decision making is undertaken by Councillors representing the wider population or a specific Ward or area in the Borough and not by individual members of the public. A Motion is as important a part of the formal machinery for decision-making as voting. Therefore, on the assumption that only duly elected or co-opted members may take part in decision-making, it would be a highly unusual step to allow persons who are not duly elected or co-opted to be involved to this extent in the formal decision making process.
13. The Committee is therefore asked to consider the above request in accordance with its remit to recommend Constitutional revisions to the Full Council.

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

14. Options for making possible revisions to the Council/Executive Procedure Rules within the Constitution are outlined in the main body of this report.

### **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES**

15.

	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
	Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.	The Question Time facilities at Council and Cabinet meetings allow the public to influence decision making, have their say and enhance accountability. The Procedure Rules referred to in this report will help to ensure that these arrangements are managed on a fair and consistent basis and that, as far as possible, full answers are provided to questioners at meetings.

### **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

16. The proposed revisions detailed in this report do not carry any particular risk to the Authority.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. There are no specific legal implications arising from the proposed changes to Procedure Rules. As these are changes to the Council's Constitution, a decision of Full Council is required to agree the revisions.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

19. There are no specific Human Resources implications associated with this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

20. There are no specific technology implications arising from this report.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

21. Where there are any specific equality issues arising from the requirement to submit written questions, officers in Governance Services will be available to provide advice and support to members of the public in need of assistance.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

22. Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Council's Constitution.  
Minute No. 26 of Full Council Meeting held on 24th September 2015.

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Jonathan Goodrum, Senior Governance Officer  
Tel. 01302 736709  
Email: [jonathan.goodrum@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.goodrum@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Roger Harvey**  
**Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services**  
**and Monitoring Officer**

## PROPOSED NEW EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES

### QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS AT EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

“Question Time” sessions for questions/statements from members of the public and Elected Members under Rule 3 (lasting for a maximum of 20 minutes in total) shall be held at ordinary meetings of the Executive.

#### 3. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC/ELECTED MEMBERS

##### 3.1 General

Members of the public i.e. people who are residents of the Borough and Elected Members may ask questions and/or make statements at any ordinary meeting of the Executive in relation to an item of business on the agenda.

##### 3.2 Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Mayor no later than 5.00 p.m. of the third working day before the day of the meeting. Each question or statement must give the name and address of the person submitting it. Questions/statements should be sent to the Governance Services , Floor 2, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU or by email to [democratic.services@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@doncaster.gov.uk).

##### 3.3 Scope of Questions

Each person will be allowed to submit one question/statement per meeting. Questions/statements should be limited to a maximum of 100 words.

The Mayor may reject a question/statement if it:

- is not a matter which relates to an item of business on the agenda for the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Executive;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Executive in the past three months;
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; or
- is submitted by a person who is not a resident of the Borough.

### **3.4 Considering the question/statement at the meeting**

Copies of all questions/statements to be heard will be made available to the public attending the meeting. The Mayor will invite the person(s) to read out their question/statement. A copy of the intended response from the Mayor shall be provided to the person submitting a question/statement at the start of the meeting, to enable them to prepare a supplementary question to ask, if they so wish, with the Chair's permission. If a person who has submitted a question or statement is unable to attend the meeting, the Mayor will read out the question/statement on the person's behalf, and a copy of the answer given will be provided to them following the meeting.

### **3.5 Supplementary question**

If the Chair permits, a member of the public or Elected Member asking a question or making a statement under Rule 3.1 may ask one supplementary question without notice. The supplemental question must arise directly out of the original question/statement or the reply and shall be put and answered without discussion.

### **3.6 Written answers**

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time due to lack of time or any other reason will be dealt with by a written answer provided within 2 weeks of the meeting.

### **3.7 Record of answers**

Details of all questions/statements made and the responses given shall be included in the decision record of the meeting.

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

**EVALUATION OF THE TICKHILL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING REFERENDUM  
HELD ON 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2015**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The Council's first Neighbourhood Planning Referendum election took place in Tickhill on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015. The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the election and to provide an update on any future Neighbourhood Planning elections. Any additional issues identified at this meeting will be incorporated into the service development plans for future elections.

**EXEMPT REPORT**

2. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION**

3. 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?**

4. A Neighbourhood Planning Referendum was held in the Tickhill area on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015 with the following question:

**“Do you want Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Tickhill to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”**

The outcome of the results were as follows:

Number of votes cast in favour of a 'YES'	1008
Number of votes cast in favour of a 'NO'	151
The number of ballot papers rejected	0
Electorate:	4359
Ballot papers:	1159
Turnout	26.59%

The outcome of the Referendum was in favour of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Tickhill area.

5. Out of an electorate of 4,359 the number of electors who voted was 1,159 (26.59% turnout), of which 1,008 were in favour of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Tickill area.
6. The Count was observed by two members of the Parish, local ward Councillors and a member of the Planning Department who all complimented on how well run and organised the election was throughout.

## **BACKGROUND**

7. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council designated the Tickhill area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Part Two of the Town and Country Planning (England), Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
8. Following the submission of the Tickhill Neighbourhood Development Plan to the Council in June 2014, the plan was publicised and representations were invited. The publicity period ended on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014.
9. The Council appointed an independent examiner, Mr Terry Heselton, to review whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. The examiner's report concludes that, subject to a number of modifications, the Plan meets the basic conditions set out in legislation and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning referendum.
10. Therefore to meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 a referendum, which poses the question 'Do you want Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Tickhill to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?' was held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015 in the Tickhill area.
11. The outcome of the Referendum was in favour of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Tickhill area. The neighbourhood plan now becomes part of the development plan. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## **12. Future Planning Referendums**

Our Planning Department have notified us of 5 other Neighbourhood Plans underway at present as follows:

### Burghwallis

The next stage is examination, expected to be by the end of this year. The earliest we would expect a referendum would be January 2016.

### Armthorpe

The next stage is examination, expected to be by the end of this year. The earliest we would expect a referendum would be January 2016.

### Thorne and Moorends

Their current project plan timetables the referendum for October 2016.

### Rossington

The very earliest would be the end of 2016.

### Bawtry

Early in the process – at least 18 months away from a referendum, likely to be early 2017.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are comprehensive statutory provisions covering the delivery of elections.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Council's Planning Department pay for the cost of a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum which is a set fee claimed back from Government.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Tickhill Neighbourhood Plan Referendum - Information Statement
- Declaration of results – Tickhill planning Referendum

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Trina Barber, Interim Team Leader – Electoral Services  
01302 734398 [Trina.Barber@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Trina.Barber@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Jo Miller**  
**Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer**

This page is intentionally left blank