

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 10TH JULY, 2018

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held in Room 007A - CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 10TH JULY, 2018, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Phil Cole.
Vice-Chair - Councillor Nick Allen.

Councillors Susan Durant, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes and Sue Wilkinson.

1 PERSONAL REFERENCE

In opening the meeting, the Chair stated that he wished to place on record his thanks to all of the former Members of the Committee for the contributions they had made to the work of the Committee, namely Councillors Sue McGuinness, Tina Reid, Majid Khan and, in particular, Kevin Rodgers. The Chair also welcomed Councillors Susan Durant, Mark Houlbrook, Lani-Mae Ball (absent) and Ken Keegan (absent) as new Members of the Committee, and Charlie Hogarth as a returning member of the Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no declarations reported at the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13TH MARCH 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 ELECTION RESULTS

The Committee received a report which provided a detailed update on the results of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Mayoral Election held on Thursday 3rd May 2018 and the Town Ward By-Election and Edlington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum held on Thursday 14th June 2018.

Combined Authority Mayoral Election – 3rd May 2018

The Electoral Services Manager summarised the results of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Mayoral Election held on 3rd May 2018 and answered a number of questions from Members. A full breakdown of the results and turnout was set out in Appendix A of the report.

Arising from discussion on the problems caused when the locations of polling stations had to be moved, at the suggestion of a Member, the Electoral Services Manager undertook to look into the possibility of posting a notice outside the old polling station, directing voters to the location of the new polling station, where there had been a change of venue since the last election.

Local Government Election – Town Ward – 14th June 2018

The Electoral Services Manager gave a brief summary of the outcome of the Town Ward By-Election held on 14th June 2018, which had resulted in Tosh McDonald being elected as a Councillor. In answer to a question, the Electoral Services Manager confirmed that the total estimated cost to the Council associated with running this By-Election was expected to be £10,000, which included the costs relating to the printing and delivery of poll cards, hire of polling stations and staffing costs.

Edlington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum – 14th June 2018

The Electoral Services Manager reported on the outcome of the Council's third Neighbourhood Planning Referendum election, held in Edlington on 14th June 2018, including the turnout figures.

During subsequent discussion, Members questioned where Neighbourhood Plans sat in relation to the other key components of the statutory development plan, including the Unitary Development Plan, and Councillors Houlbrook and Durant gave an update on the current status of the Thorne and Moorends Neighbourhood Development Plan. Arising from this discussion, Members concurred with a suggestion by the Chair that it would be useful if a Members' Seminar could be arranged on the subject of Neighbourhood Development Plans and their relationship with the other components of the Development Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted, and a request be made for a Members' Seminar to be arranged on the subject of Neighbourhood Development Plans and how they relate to the other plans comprising the statutory development plan.

5 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Electoral Services Manager providing Members with an update on the key plans to be undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and Annual Canvass and the current electorate breakdown.

It was reported that plans were being put in place to commence this year's annual canvass in August, and that the initial Household Enquiry Form was to be sent out to 138,600 properties within the Borough. Reminder letters would be sent out to non-responding properties in September, then again in October. During September to November, telephone and door to door canvassing would also be undertaken in relation to any outstanding non-responding properties.

Members were advised that a proactive approach was required throughout the year and not just during the canvass period in order to maintain an accurate and complete register, ensuring as far as possible that all eligible persons were on the register and

that all non-eligible persons were removed. Details of the initiatives being currently undertaken were presented within paragraph 6 of the report.

It was noted that as of the 1st June 2018, the full electorate was 223,607 and a full electorate breakdown by ward was attached at Appendix A of the report.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that Members could play a valuable role in helping the team to spread the word and encourage people to get on the Electoral Register and she stated that the Elections Team could provide Members with material to help with publicity in their respective Wards. In answer to a question, the Electoral Services Manager confirmed that posters were being produced for display in public buildings such as libraries, providing information for the public on how to register.

Arising from a query as regards the impact of new housing developments on the Electoral Register, the Committee requested information on the numbers of new houses that have appeared in each Ward over the past few years.

In response to a further query on postal votes, the Electoral Services Manager undertook to provide Members with a breakdown detailing the proportion of postal voters in each Ward.

The Electoral Services Manager confirmed, in reply to a question as to whether a landlord could be registered at his/her flats, that the landlord could only be registered at the address where he/she resided.

After the Chair had re-affirmed that the Committee was hugely impressed with, and proud of, the Council's Electoral Services Team, it was

RESOLVED that, subject to the above requests for additional information, the report be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____