

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 9TH JULY, 2019

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held in Room 007A - CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 9TH JULY, 2019, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors Pat Haith, Rachel Hodson, Mark Houlbrook, Kevin Rodgers, Derek Smith and Sue Wilkinson.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sean Gibbons.

1 PERSONAL REFERENCE

In opening the meeting, the Chair stated that he wished to place on record his thanks to the outgoing Members of the Committee for the contributions they had made during their tenures on the Committee. The Chair also welcomed Councillors Rachel Hodson, Majid Khan (absent), Jane Kidd (absent), Kevin Rodgers and Derek Smith as new Members 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 MEETINGS HELD ON 5TH FEBRUARY AND 1ST MAY 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 5th February and 1st May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 ELECTION RESULTS - EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION HELD ON THURSDAY 23RD MAY 2019

The Committee received a report which provided a detailed update on the results of the European Parliamentary Elections held on Thursday 23rd May 2019. The Electoral Services Manager explained that, due to the uncertainty surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union, these Elections had been called at relatively short notice, with confirmation that they were going ahead only having been received on 7th May 2019.

In summarising the turnout figures, the Electoral Services Manager confirmed that the numbers of people casting votes at polling stations and those who had voted by post had been of similar numbers (both in the region of 33, 500). It was noted that letters had been sent to those electors whose postal vote packs had been rejected, informing them of the rejection and the reasons why.

The Electoral Services Manager drew the Committee's attention to Appendix A to the report, which gave a full breakdown of Doncaster's totals and turnout, along with a breakdown of the total result and details of the six elected MEPs for the Yorkshire and Humber region. She added that further breakdowns by each individual local authority could be found on the Leeds City Council's website.

General discussion followed, during which Members asked a range of questions and made various comments on the running of these Elections.

Arising from a query on the statistics in relation to rejected ballot papers, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the proportion of rejected papers was a very small percentage given the contentious nature of the national debate that had been continuing in the lead up to the Elections. He added that it was apparent that the vast majority of rejected ballot papers had been purposely spoiled by voters, rather than being caused by confusion over how many parties to vote for or any other reason.

In reply to a comment with regard to the requirement for European voters to complete a second form in order to be eligible to vote, the Electoral Services Manager outlined the measures that had been taken by the Council to ensure that as many European voters as possible were able to participate in the European Parliamentary Elections. This had included sending out letters to every effected voter (approximately 10,000), and also publicising on the Council's website and via other platforms and forums. In addition, the Council's contact centre staff had also been trained to be able to assist people and explain the process. There had been a very quick turnaround time for sending the relevant forms out to voters within the timeframe available, but a large number of forms had been returned in time.

After the Committee had congratulated the Council's Electoral Services Team, and the wider staff involved, on the successful running of the Elections, especially in the light of having to make the necessary arrangements at short notice, it was

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and to place on record this Committee's thanks to all staff involved in the conduct of the European Parliamentary Elections.

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The Electoral Services Manager tabled, for Members' information, an update sheet comprising graphs which showed the Borough's electorate statistics by ward at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and percentage of postal voters by ward. The Committee noted that it would receive further updates through the year, as the annual canvass was progressing.

The Electoral Services Manager then outlined the timeframe for the annual canvass and confirmed that the deadline for people to respond to the initial Household Enquiry Form (HEF) was the end of July. It was noted that 21,000 responses to the HEF had already been received through electronic response. Reminder letters would be sent out in August, giving people a further month to respond. This would then be followed by telephone and door knock canvassing. Other awareness raising activities carried out by the Electoral Services team included working closely with schools and colleges to publicise the registration process with young people in order to increase the number of attainers on the Register ready for when they reached voting age.

In reply to questions, the Electoral Services Manager outlined the additional electorate/register data that could be circulated to Members if they so wished. This could be provided by way of detailed breakdowns per polling district, ward and the whole Borough showing statistics under various categories, such as the numbers of streets, properties, electors, attainers (16/17 year olds), over 76 year olds, postal voters, proxy voters, service and overseas voters.

After Members had discussed the various factors that could potentially influence the registration figures, such as population movements in and out of the Borough, and influxes of students, it was

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

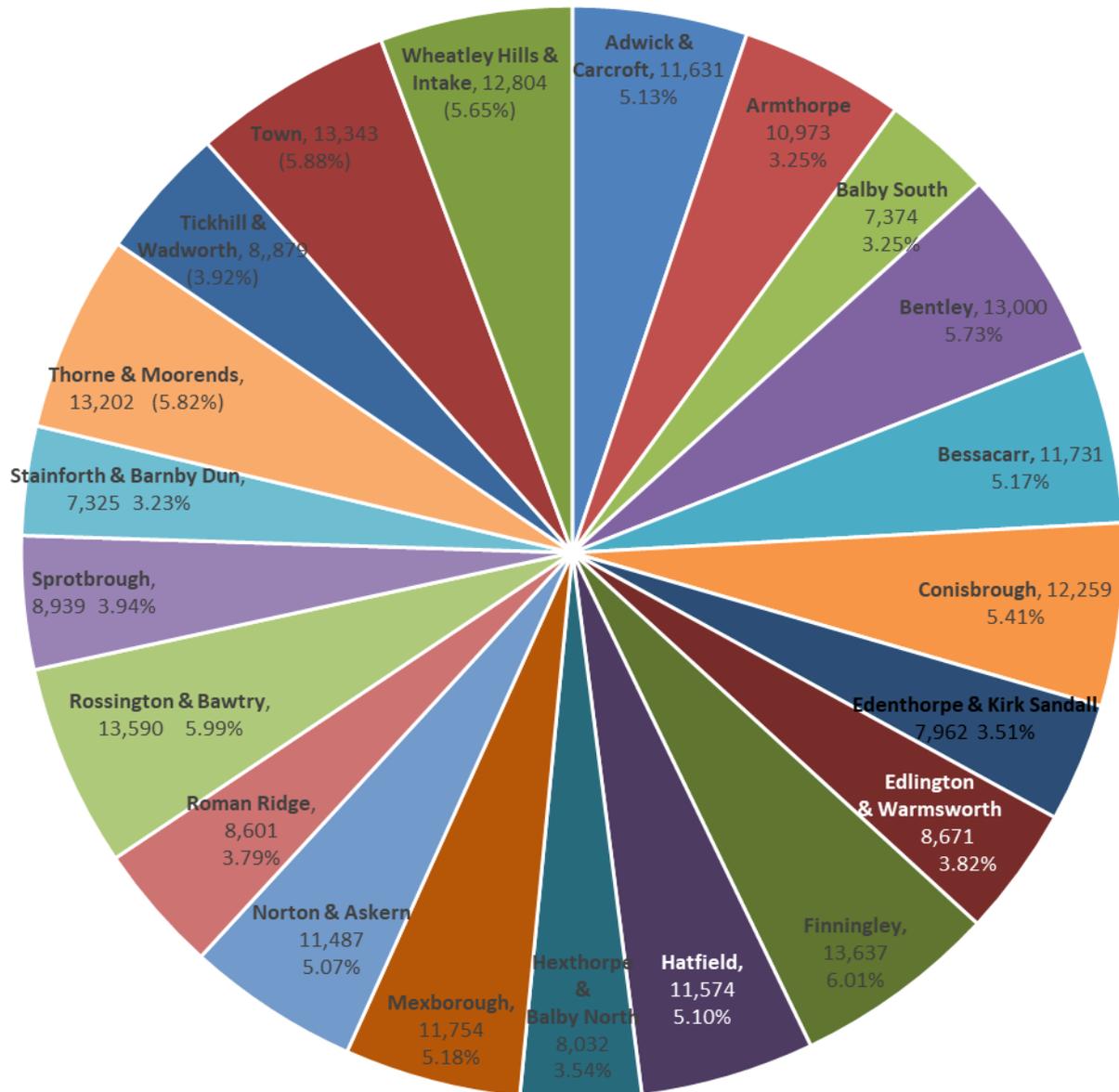
CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Electorate Statistics by Ward 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

Total Electorate: **226,768** (1<sup>st</sup> December: 225,136)  
 Ward % of full Electorate



- |                           |                     |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Adwick & Carcroft       | ■ Armthorpe         | ■ Balby South             | ■ Bentley                |
| ■ Bessacarr               | ■ Conisbrough       | ■ Edenthorpe              | ■ Edlington & Warmsworth |
| ■ Finningley              | ■ Hatfield          | ■ Hexthorpe & Balby North | ■ Mexborough             |
| ■ Norton & Askern         | ■ Roman Ridge       | ■ Rossington & Bawtry     | ■ Sprotbrough            |
| ■ Stainforth & Barnby Dun | ■ Thorne & Moorends | ■ Tickhill & Wadworth     | ■ Town                   |
| ■ Wheatley Hills & Intake |                     |                           |                          |

Total Electorate: 226,768

Total Postal Voters: 58,444 (25.77% of the electorate are postal voters, % per ward broken down below)

