



Doncaster Council

Agenda

To all Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

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

Venue: Room 007a - Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU.

Date: Tuesday, 9th July, 2019

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Items for Discussion:

Page No.

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 1 - 8 Meetings held on 5th February and 1st May 2019.
- A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.**
5. Election Results - European Parliamentary Election held on Thursday 23rd May 2019 9 - 16

**Damian Allen
Acting Chief Executive**

Issued on: Monday 1st July 2019

Governance Services Officer for this meeting: Jonathan Goodrum, Senior Governance Officer. Tel. 01302 736709

MEMBERS OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE
(11)

Chair – Councillor Phil Cole

Vice-Chair – Councillor Nick Allen

Councillor Sean Gibbons	Councillor Jane Kidd
Councillor Pat Haith	Councillor Kevin Rodgers
Councillor Rachel Hodson	Councillor Derek Smith
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Councillor Sue Wilkinson
Councillor Majid Khan	

Agenda Item 4.

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2019

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the 007A, CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2019, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors Pat Haith, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes and Sue Wilkinson.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Susan Durant and Sean Gibbons.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

11 MINUTES OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27TH NOVEMBER, 2018.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November, 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 ELECTIONS/BY-ELECTIONS/REFERENDUMS UPDATE.

The Committee received a detailed update and results of the Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council, Cusworth Ward By-Election and the Askern Town Council By-Election which were both held on Thursday 6th December, 2018.

It was reported that in relation to Sprotbrough & Cusworth, there was an eligible electorate of 1,740 electors of which 579 had postal votes issued and 258 (44.56%) were returned and personal identifiers correctly verified. A further 2 postal votes were rejected and those electors had been notified accordingly. There was one polling station on polling day which 68 (5.86) electors visited to vote.

Members were advised that there were two candidates and Tony Nicholson was elected as a Parish Councillor for Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council – Cusworth Ward. Appendix A to the report contained a full breakdown of the results.

With regard to Askern Town Council, there was an eligible electorate of 3,881 electors of which 931 had postal votes issued and 365 (39.21%) were returned and personal identifiers correctly verified. A further 6 postal votes were rejected and those electors

had been notified accordingly. There were three polling stations on polling day which a very low number of 29 (0.98%) electors visited to vote.

Members were advised that there were two candidates and Sarah Elizabeth Blanchard was elected as a Town Councillor for Askern Town Council. Appendix B to the report contained a full breakdown of the results.

Information was also provided in relation to the two by-elections that had taken place in Bawtry. It was noted that only 1 nomination was received for both, therefore the election were uncontested and candidates Diana Lyn Kirby and Ivor Calvin Greer were both automatically elected to the Town Council.

Members were also advised that it had been suggested that the reason for the low turnout for the Askern Town Council election may have been because the Town Council decided not to issue poll cards.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION - PROGRESS REPORT.

The Committee received an update report on a number of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and Annual Canvass. The report included, at Appendix A, an updated breakdown of the responses received to the Household Enquiry Form (HEF) by return method in this year's annual canvass in comparison to 2015-2017 inclusive.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services updated Members on the progress of the annual canvass, and outlined how the Electoral Services Team was being proactive to help increase the response rate by way of the following new initiatives:-

- Contact centre and one stop shop reception
- The Councils 'My Doncaster Account'
- Schools/Colleges
- Marketing and Engagement
- Home Movers

During subsequent discussion, the Officers answered questions and Members made comments/observations on a range of issues including the following:-

- With regard to the signatures of voters for postal votes, it was asked how often these would be renewed. In response, it was advised that this would be carried on yearly basis. It was noted that 15,500 letters had been posted out and the usual response rate was 90%. There would be a slight dip in postal votes throughout the renewal process however, poll cards would be issued and the opportunity to re-apply for a postal vote would be given. The Electoral Services Team would also write to the person outlining the reasons why the vote had been rejected which also gave the elector the opportunity to re-apply.
- In response to a comment made regarding how many people were not registered and the need to be registered by law, Officers stated that there was a requirement by law for people to register on the Electoral Roll however, there

was no covenant to support this. It was noted that for those people applying for credit, it can prove difficult to obtain without being on the Electoral Roll.

- With regard to information sharing between the Electoral Services Team and other Council departments, Officers confirmed that the team was able to access Benefits and Council Tax information and the team were currently looking at liaising with colleagues at St. Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) to identify any scope for accessing some information they held on the database. It was also suggested by a member that the team liaise with the Landlord Registration Scheme in Hexthorpe.
- A question was raised in relation to the possibility of apply a penalty for non-registration. Officers reported that a penalty can be applied however, the Council would not receive the money generated this would go to Central Government, which is the reason why Councils throughout the country had not applied penalties for not registering. It was pointed out to Members that whilst this was not an option, the team were doing all they can to ensure people register through the numerous work streams identified.
- The Chair stated that it was pleasing to see that the electorate had grown by 2000. He made reference to the new registrations highlighted at paragraph 7 of the report and asked whether these were registered via the Household. Officers commented that this would be in the case however, the team would write to them asking them to register themselves.
- It was noted that there were certain parts of the borough where there were caravan parks which were registered. However, it had been brought to Members attention that there was a holiday village within the borough and assurance was sought as to the criteria for registration and whether any applications had been received from there. Officers stated that to their knowledge no forms had been received but if details could be forwarded to them, this would be investigated following the meeting. Officers wished to advise members that registration to be placed on the Electoral Roll needs to identify your primary residence. It was noted that some residents primary place of residence within the Borough would be on a boat or barge. Officer also advised that if a homeless person had been living within a hostel for a number of months then they can be registered on the Electoral Roll using that as their primary residence.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 1ST MAY, 2019

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held in Room 008 - CIVIC OFFICE, on WEDNESDAY, 1ST MAY, 2019, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors Susan Durant, Pat Haith, David Hughes and Sue Wilkinson.

Also in attendance:

Councillor David Nevett.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Gibbons, Mark Houlbrook and Kenneth Keegan.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

There were no declarations reported at the meeting.

15 REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Scott Fawcus, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, presented a report which consulted Members on proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution, including the Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) and Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), as set out at Appendices A to C of the report, respectively, prior to any formal recommendations being considered by full Council at its Annual Council meeting on 17th May, 2019.

The proposed revisions were:

- in response to issues which have arisen since the Constitution was last reviewed. Specifically, these related to the Articles (Section 3 of Part 2 of the Constitution) Council Procedure Rules (Section 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution) and the Executive Procedure Rules (Section 4 of Part 4 of the Constitution).
- to ensure the CPRs were in line with the relevant legislation; best practice procurement practices and enhance the governance around contracting activity; and
- to ensure the FPRs were in line with the relevant legislation; current working practices; better aligned to the key decision thresholds; provide greater clarity

to managers and ensure financial decision making is made at the appropriate level.

The Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director Finance, the Head of Financial Management, the Head of Procurement and Governance Manager were in attendance at the meeting and outlined the key changes to the Financial Procedure Rules and the Contract Procedure Rules.

Members of the Audit Committee had been invited to the meeting to comment on the proposed changes to the Constitution. The Chair welcomed Councillor David Nevett to the meeting.

Discussion followed, during which the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services, the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Financial Management, the Head of Procurement and Governance Manager responded to a range of questions and concerns from Members seeking clarity on the provisions. The Committee made the following comments/recommendations:-

Part 2 - Proposed revisions to Article 3 of the Constitution – The Full Council 3.01 Functions of Full Council:-

Following questions from Members, it was noted that the Chair of Council in consultation with the Elected Mayor could call a State of the Borough Assessment at any time. The revised suggestion was to hold a Partnership seminar to meet with other agencies to consider the State of the Borough Assessment and other matters including, health and crime and disorder and all Members of Council would be invited to attend. Members welcomed the opportunity to attend a Partnership Summit or an alternative forum to meet with other agencies to consider the State of the Borough Assessment. The Committee gave their support to the proposal to remove the obligation to hold a State of the Borough Assessment on an annual basis.

Part 2 – Articles of the Constitution Article 8 – Decision Making 8.03 Types of Decision – Appendix B1 Key Decisions and Proposed Revisions to Financial Procedure Rules

Members supported the proposal for the overall definition for key decisions to remain unchanged and for the financial threshold to be retained at £250,000 for revenue decisions, including the additional limit of over £1m for capital decisions. This change would provide a better alignment of capital decisions, provide greater clarity for managers, improve the overall understanding of the rules and remove the contradictions between the FPRs and key decision thresholds.

In relation to the additional exception which had been included in Financial Procedure Rules for Care Plans, in accordance with legislative requirements, Members were supportive of this.

Part 4 – Section 1 – Council Procedure Rules 15.2.2 – Questions by Members

In relation to a Member of the Council being able to ask the Mayor, the relevant Cabinet Member or the Chair of a Committee a Supplementary question in relation to questions on and Without Notice, Members welcomed this proposal which they felt was the right approach, thereby bringing consistency to the procedure.

Proposed revisions to Executive Procedure Rules - Part 4 – Section 4 – Executive Procedure Rules - 1.8 Quorum for a meeting of the Executive

In discussing the quorum of a meeting of the Executive, Members were supportive of simplifying the procedure if either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor were unable to attend at a meeting of the Executive. It was agreed that the quorum for a meeting of the Executive shall be 3, including either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor. However, the Committee wanted to ensure that in the event of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being absent at a meeting of the Executive, that the quorum of Cabinet should be 3, plus one additional Member, this was to support accountability of the Cabinet.

Part 4 – Section 4 – Executive Procedure Rules – Conduct of Executive Meetings

The Committee supported the proposal to provide a process if either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor were unable to attend and Chair at a meeting of the Executive.

Proposed revisions to Financial Procedure Rules – Appendix B1

During Members' consideration of the proposed revisions to the provisions of the Financial Procedure Rules, it was noted that there was a drafting error on (page 24) of the agenda papers, in respect of Section B.14 of Appendix B1, which should read as '£250,000' and not '£250' as outlined. Furthermore, a typographical error was also highlighted at Paragraph 14(c) (i), (page 4) of the report, which should read as 'from' £50,000 and not 'to' £50,000, as outlined. The Head of Financial Management gave an undertaking to amend accordingly.

In referring to paragraph 14(c) (ii), of the report regarding the alignment of the financial limits to the FPRs relating to the new key decision thresholds, a Member queried the reasons why there was a significant increase from £50,000 to £250,000 to the limit for approval of Grants to Voluntary organisations. In response, the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director Finance explained that previously there was an inconsistency in relation to decision making in respect of some Grants to Voluntary organisations, particularly relating to the commissioning of services opposed to grants generally. Currently there were a range of thresholds in respect of providing grants to Voluntary Organisations, including the commissioning of services, which had different thresholds for similar activities. Increasing the threshold limit to £250,000 provides simplicity, clarity and consistency in respect of delegated authority to provide such grants/commissioning of services.

During further discussion, in respect of FPR, E.17, (Page 39) of the agenda 'Grants to Outside Bodies, 'Where the Council was acting as an accountable body', a Member raised concerns regarding the removal of safeguards-protections for both the Council and the accountable-funding body, and queried whether those safeguards were included elsewhere in the Constitution. The Head of Financial Management, confirmed that FPR E.17 had not been removed. The safeguards currently in place remained and covered both when the Council was the accountable body and when it was not.

During discussion in relation to FPR C.17 'Asset Management', a Member commented that whilst the Council's Property Register was available in both electronic and hard copy formats, pointed out that the information held on the electronic register conflicted with the information held on the paper register. To ensure that this matter was addressed, it was proposed that FPR. C.17 be amended to reflect that the Council had a 'complete' register of all Council land and buildings.

Part 4 – Constitution - Revisions to Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) – Appendix C1 and Appendix C2 (Complimentary Guide)

During Members' consideration of the proposed changes to Contract Procedure Rules, the Head of Procurement and Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director Finance responded to questions from Members seeking clarity and an understanding of the use of Third Party Framework Agreements and the term 'Verbal' quotations.

Members made reference to the impact of Brexit, which was subject to EU procurement rules and further to clarity being sought, the Head of Procurement provided an explanation with regard to the Council's obligations under the Social Value Act 2012 provision, in relation to the procurement of contracts, as outlined in paragraph 19 of the report. Members also spoke about the broader environmental impact and the improvement on the Borough through the procurement of services, in particular relating to the recyclable materials. Following further questions, the Committee endorsed the proposed changes to Contract Procedure Rules.

To conclude, the Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked Officers for the presentation of the reports and their attendance at the meeting.

A. RESOLVED it be noted that the drafting error at section B.14 of Financial Procedure Rules, be amended to read as '£250,000' and not '£250', as outlined.

B. RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL TO APPROVE:-

(1) the proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution, as outlined within Appendices A to C to the report, subject to the following changes:-

(2) Part 4 – Section 4 – Executive Procedure Rules - 1.8 Quorum for a meeting of the Executive

Section 4 Executive Procedure Rules of Part 4 of the Constitution be amended as follows:-

The quorum for a meeting of the Executive shall be 3, including either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor; and

Where the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present at a meeting of the Executive, the quorum will be 4.

(3) Financial Procedure Rule C.17 – Asset Management

Financial Procedure Rule C.17 – Asset Management, be amended to reflect that the Council had a 'complete' register of all Council land and buildings.

CHAIR:_____

DATE:_____



Doncaster Council

Report

9th July 2019

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

ELECTION RESULTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides members with a detailed update and the results of the European Parliamentary Election held on Thursday 23rd May 2019.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. This report is for information only.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Having accessible and well organised elections is key to public engagement in the democratic process. Elections are the cornerstone of our democratic process and are important to all of our residents. Elections give the electorate the opportunity to hold politicians to account and shape the future direction of national and local government.

BACKGROUND

5. The last European Parliamentary Elections took place in 2014. As the UK was scheduled to leave the EU on 29th March 2019 it was believed the UK would not have to participate in them this year. Due to the delay in leaving the EU, it was announced at the European Summit on 11th April 2019 that the UK would need to take part in the elections unless a withdrawal could be agreed in advance of polling day. Direction was given by the government to plan for the European Elections with a final agreement by the UK government on the 7th May 2019 that the elections would go ahead.

The European Parliamentary Elections took place on Thursday 23 May 2019. Doncaster Council is part of the Yorkshire and the Humber Region which elected 6 Members of the European Parliament. There are 21 local authorities within The Yorkshire and The Humber region. Leeds City Council was the lead authority for the region and was responsible for publishing the results and overall direction of the election.

European Parliamentary Election – 23rd May 2019

The Terms of Reference of this Committee provide an overview of Electoral Services issues. Set out below are the detailed results and turnout in relation to this election for the Doncaster area:

There was an electorate of 217,343 of which 57,523 were registered postal voters. On polling day 33,516 (20.97%) electors cast their vote in the 159 polling stations across Doncaster and 33,583 (58.38%) voted by post. A further 624 postal vote packs were rejected due to the personal identifiers not matching and letters have been sent to those electors to inform them of that rejection and the reason why. A total of 67,099 ballot papers were verified giving a total turnout of 30.87% for the Doncaster area. The total turnout for all the Yorkshire and the Humber region was 3,867,792 (33.3%).

A full breakdown of Doncaster’s totals and turnout can be found at **Appendix A** of this report, along with a breakdown of the total result and the six elected MEPs for Yorkshire and the Humber Region. For a further breakdown by each authority please visit Leeds City Council web page at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/your-council/elections/eu-parliamentary-election-results>

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6. Elections are statutory function and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

- 7. This report is primarily for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

- 8.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	

	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents 	<p>The Council has statutory duties to support elections</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

9. Ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to deliver well-run elections improve our reputation and meeting the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SRF Date: 28/6/19]

10. The arrangements detailed in this report are designed to ensure compliance with a range of statutory duties including:
 - European Parliamentary Elections Regulations 2004 (as amended)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PH Date: 27/06/2019]

11. There are no financial implications to the Council. The full costs associated with the European Parliamentary Election are claimed back from Government.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

12. N/A

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

13. N/A

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

14. N/A

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: TB Date: 26/06/19]

15. The Council has a duty to ensure Elections and Referendums are well managed to allow all eligible electors to freely vote by secret ballot ensuring freedom of expression and political debate by exercising their vote.

CONSULTATION

16. N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. Previous EDSC reports.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Trina Barber
Electoral Services Manager
Legal & Democratic Services

Tel: 01302 734398

E-mail: trina.barber@doncaster.gov.uk

Damian Allen
Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer

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European Parliamentary Elections: 23 May 2019 Yorkshire and the Humber Region

Local totals for the Doncaster local counting area

Doncaster's Results

Party	Number of votes
Change UK – The Independent Group	1565
Conservative and Unionist Party	4122
English Democrats	953
Green Party	4898
Labour Party	11393
Liberal Democrats	5908
The Brexit Party	30016
The Yorkshire Party	3963
UK Independence Party (UKIP)	3862

Ballot papers were rejected as follows:

Rejected ballot papers	Number rejected
A. Does not bear the official mark	0
B. Voting for more than one party	119
C. Writing or mark by which the voter can be identified	4
D. Unmarked or void for uncertainty	296
The total number of rejected ballot papers was:	419

Electorate	Turnout
217,343	30.87%

European Parliamentary Elections: 23 May 2019 Yorkshire and the Humber Region Results

Yorkshire and the Humber total Results

Party	Number of votes
Change UK – The Independent Group	30,162
Conservative and Unionist Party	92,863
English Democrats	11,283
Green Party	166,980
Labour Party	210,516
Liberal Democrats	200,180
The Brexit Party	470,351
The Yorkshire Party	50,842
UK Independence Party (UKIP)	56,100

Electorate	Turnout
3,867,792	33.3%

Elected MEPs

Seat	Party	Candidate
1	The Brexit Party	John Longworth
2	The Brexit Party	Lucy Elizabeth Harris
3	Labour Party	Richard Graham Corbett
4	Liberal Democrats	Shaffaq Mohammed
5	Green Party	Magid Magid
6	The Brexit Party	Jake Pugh