



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: Council Chamber, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU

Date: Tuesday, 23rd November, 2021

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Please Note: For those who are attending the meeting, please bring a face covering, unless you are exempt.

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**Damian Allen
Chief Executive**

Issued on: Monday 15th November 2021

Governance Services Officer for this meeting: Amber Torrington, Governance Officer
0302 737462

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 Meeting held on 13th July 2021. 1 - 8
- A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.**
5. By-Election and Neighbourhood Planning Referendum Update. 9 - 14
 6. Annual Canvass Update. 15 - 20

MEMBERS OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE (11)**Chair** – Councillor Ian Pearson**Vice-Chair** – Councillor Nick Allen

Councillor James Church	Councillor Majid Khan
Councillor Gemma Cobby	Councillor Emma Muddiman-Rawlins
Councillor Julie Grace	Councillor Thomas Noon
Councillor Debbie Hutchinson	Councillor Andy Pickering
Councillor Jake Kearsley	

Agenda Item 4.

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2021

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2021, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

Vice-Chair - Councillor Nick Allen (In the Chair)

Councillors Gemma Cobby, Debbie Hutchinson, Jake Kearsley, Majid Khan and Emma Muddiman-Rawlins.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Pearson, James Church and Julie Grace.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

There were no declarations of interests made at the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY, 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February, 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 2021 ELECTION RESULTS

The Committee considered a report which provided Members with detailed information and results of the combined Mayoral, Borough, Parish, Police and Crime Commissioner and Edenthorpe Neighbourhood Planning Referendum elections, held on Thursday, 6th May, 2021.

Trina Barber, Electoral Services Manager in presenting the report, advised that in February 2021, the Government had confirmed that the elections were to take place on 6th May, 2021. The Electoral Services Team had set in train planning for the elections in November, 2020. Due to Covid-19, the Government had provided local authorities with additional funding to directly address the costs associated with making the elections Covid-19 secure, with Doncaster receiving £101,823.

It was highlighted that Doncaster had the highest number of elections in the South Yorkshire region and one of the highest across the country (all-out Council Borough elections, the Doncaster Mayoral election, all-out Parish elections for all 304 seats and the delayed 2020 South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Election, and Edenthorpe Neighbourhood Planning Referendum).

The Electoral Services Manager highlighted the logistical challenges faced by the Elections team in running all five elections simultaneously this year and in a safe and

Covid-19 compliant environment, including, problems with sourcing and booking of polling stations and count venues and the appointment and training of a high number of polling station staff.

The Electoral Services Manager outlined the main points within the report with regard to combining the Mayoral, Borough Councillors and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections into one postal voting pack, the outcome of each election, including the number of postal vote packs rejected, the number of candidates, the number of electors who had cast their vote on polling day, the number of polling stations, the number of electors who had voted by post, the number of ballot papers verified and the total turnout in percentages. Appendix A to the report provided a breakdown of the results for each election.

To conclude the presentation of the report, the Electoral Services Manager highlighted the number of positive comments made by candidates, agents and staff in relation to the election process.

During discussion of the report, the Electoral Services Manager and Monitoring Officer answered a range of questions from Members including the following:-

- In response to a question from a Member, the Electoral Services Manager advised that there had been no reported cases involving attempted electoral voter fraud at polling stations in Doncaster. All staff were fully trained to be competent in their required duties on polling stations and were advised to record any instances of potential voter fraud in the log books provided if any issues arose at the elections. Staff were also provided with business cards to report any issues. In the event of any fraudulent behaviour taking place, staff are instructed to inform the Electoral Services Team. It was further reported that postal votes were delivered at polling stations throughout the day, but no issues had been reported.
- Arising from a question whether there would be any changes to legislation to make voter photo identification mandatory for voters when voting in elections as a means of tackling electoral fraud and whether this would potentially create more work for election staff having to verify electors ID, it was explained that the Bill regarding the introduction of voter photo ID cards and how the scheme would work in practice was yet to be considered by Parliament. It was anticipated that for those electors who were not able to provide some form of identification to vote, local authorities would be given funding from the Government for the creation and issuing of voter photo ID cards. Voters would be able to apply for a free voter card from their local authority to use in polling stations. It was noted that polling staff would need training on the proposed changes and additional time would be needed at polling stations for people to show their ID. Further work would be required by the Council to assess the impacts of any change in law.
- A Member advised the Committee that he had been informed by a number of residents in various wards that due to changes in polling stations locations it had made voting more difficult by not necessarily having a polling station on the 'doorstep'. He asked if an analysis of turnout in previous years could be undertaken to ascertain if these changes had a detrimental impact on voter turnout.

The Electoral Services Manager informed Members that due to Covid-19, a number of buildings the Council would normally use as a polling station had been closed, in addition Public Health England had advised against the use of portable units. In these circumstances, the Council had little alternative but to have polling stations in the buildings used. Due to the pressing timescale, it was not possible to carry out the usual consultation on relocating polling stations. She confirmed that a comparison of voter turn-out in areas where changes to polling stations locations had been made would be undertaken, but it was confirmed that the overall turnout of 28.2% was not unusual for Doncaster. It was also highlighted that turnout was dependent upon voter engagement and that this varied substantially dependent upon the type of election.

Scott Fawcus, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services stated that all electors who had been affected by a change in polling station location had been notified of the change on their polling card letter that outlined various methods of voting. Adverts had also been published in the local press and information posted on social media informing of the options for casting votes.

- In response to a question whether the national Government guidance provided to local authorities regarding administering the elections this year was self-explanatory, or had local authorities had been expected to interpret the guidance themselves. It was reported that the Council had followed Government guidance and the restrictions to be put in place. In relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, it was noted that all four South Yorkshire authorities had followed the same approach to ensure that the elections were Covid-19 compliant, social distancing restrictions were followed and risk assessments carried out. Public Health Guidance had been sought on behalf of the Returning Officer.
- In answer to a question regarding whether the usual polling stations which had been closed or re-located elsewhere would be re-opened/re-instated for the next local election when Covid restrictions were lifted, the Electoral Services Manager advised that the Council was to hold Combined Authority Mayoral elections in May next year and subject to restrictions being lifted, the Electoral Services Team would endeavour to reopen the usual polling stations. It was noted that any significant on-going changes to polling stations would be reported to this Committee and all Members of the Council.

The Committee commended the Electoral Services Manager and the Electoral Services Team for their efforts and fantastic work undertaken in conducting and organising the smooth running of the combined elections under such challenging circumstances and with limited resources. Members also gave thanks to all staff involved in making the elections a success. Members also wished to place on record their thanks to the Director of Public Health and the Public Health Team for the outstanding contribution they had made in supporting the Electoral Services Team and elections this year.

RESOLVED that the report on the 2021 Elections results be noted.

4 ANNUAL CANVASS

The Electoral Services Manager provided Members with an overview of the key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and the preparations for the start of the Annual Canvass.

It was reported that each year, the Electoral Registration Officer had a duty to carry out a full annual review of the Electoral Register. In light of the introduction of the canvass reforms last year, the annual canvass had been changed which allowed the Council to carry out the annual canvass without the need to require a response from every household across the Borough. It also changed where if electors could be matched to a property using national data and the Council's data sources, where there was found to be no change and was matched with the Department of Works and Pensions and that the elector still lived at the same address meant a letter was sent to the property asking the resident to confirm whether there was a change to the people residing at the property and to inform the Elections team of any changes.

It was noted that the annual canvass was to take place from July to the 30th November 2021. The register would be updated on a monthly basis to include additions, changes to and people being removed from the register. Following the conclusion of the annual canvass, a revised version of the electoral register was to be published on 1st December, 2021 and each person would be provided with a new electoral registration number.

Under the reformed canvass, data matching would be used at the outset of the canvass to help identify those properties where the residents were more likely to have changed. The Electoral Services Team had already carried out the data step matching process against the national Government data. The Electoral Services Manager explained the process to be followed which would be one of two routes for each property; Route 1 matched properties that are not required to respond and Route 2 unmatched properties where there has been changes to the property. In addition, local data matching had been carried out with the Council's Council Tax department and Customer Services, which had resulted in a match of 104,590 properties which was 74.20% and 36, 319 unmatched properties put into Route 2.

It was noted that all electors in Route 1 would be contacted by letter or email to find out whether there are any changes to the property. Properties in Route 2 that had not been successfully data matched should receive letters next week where the householder would be asked to provide confirmation to the Electoral Services Team in relation to who resides at the properties. For those people who did not provide a response for Route 2 properties, this would be followed up with telephone canvassing, correspondence, email and foot canvassing. In relation to Route 3 properties, multi-occupancy properties, such as Care Homes would be contacted by telephone and email to ensure that recent and update information on residents was kept up to date.

The Electoral Services Manager drew Members attention to page 9 of the agenda which set out the reformed canvass model for the annual canvass and provided an update on statistical data in relation to matched properties for Doncaster electors as of 9th June, 2021.

It was noted that funding for the annual canvass was provided by central government. The Council had not yet received or had an indication of the expected amount.

Members were informed that this information would be shared with the Committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED that the report on a number of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and the preparations for the start of the Annual Canvass, be noted.

5 2023 PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Committee considered a report presented by the Electoral Services Manager which provided details of a consultation that was being carried out by the Boundary Commission for England on initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries for England in 2023, using data from the Parliamentary Electorate as of the 2nd March 2020.

The Boundary Commission was currently conducting an independent review of all Parliamentary constituencies boundaries based on new rules approved by Parliament in 2020. The Commission was required to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is more equal, based on an electorate no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.

It was noted that the proposals if agreed, would mean that Doncaster would still have three constituencies, however, the names of those constituencies; Don Valley, Doncaster Central and Doncaster North would change and one constituency would no longer only contain Doncaster wards.

Doncaster would take on three wards from the North Lincolnshire, Axholme Central, North and South constituencies, with three wards having a Doncaster Constituency/MP covering this area. Doncaster would receive ballot papers from North Lincolnshire for the three wards when a parliamentary election takes place. North Lincolnshire Council would have responsibility of verifying both postal votes and polling station ballot papers before delivering them to Doncaster's (Acting) Returning Officer. It was noted that this would likely cause time implications for the counting of votes and declaration of results, due to the length of time it may take North Lincolnshire Council to verify and then transport those ballot papers from their Count venue to Doncaster.

Two wards currently within Doncaster, Conisbrough and Edlington, & Warmsworth wards with a combined electorate of 20,565, would be given to a Rotherham constituency and have a Rotherham MP. Therefore, Doncaster would provide ballot papers to Rotherham Council from these wards when a parliamentary election takes place. Doncaster would have responsibility to verify both Postal Vote and Polling Station ballot papers before delivering them to Rotherham's (Acting) Returning Officer.

The Electoral Services Manager made reference to some of the logistical challenges that the proposed changes would bring for Doncaster.

A breakdown of the proposals of the 3 Doncaster constituencies and Rotherham Council's constituency to include two Doncaster wards, were detailed at Paragraphs 14 to 17 of the report.

It was noted that information on the full review of all parliamentary constituencies in England was available on the Boundary Commissions website. Consultation on the

initial proposals had commenced on 8th June, 2021 and would end on 2nd August, 2021. The public was invited to make representations and to feedback on the proposed boundaries on the Boundary Commissions online portal. All responses would be considered by the Boundary Commission. This would be followed by a further consultation later on in the year. Members were encouraged to submit any comments on the proposals.

The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Council's Returning Officer would provide a response to the proposals in relation to operational issues such as the receipt of ballot papers from North Lincolnshire Council and the sending of ballot papers to Rotherham Council. The Monitoring Officer highlighted that non-coterminous constituency boundaries were not exclusive to Doncaster Council and existed across other authorities.

During discussion on this issue, a range of views were expressed by Members, with some being opposed to the proposals, whilst others in support. In light of this, it was proposed that it would not be feasible to make a representation on behalf of the Committee regarding the proposals. In noting the diverse views expressed by the Committee, it was considered more appropriate for representations to be made by political groups, or Members on an individual basis.

Arising from a question from a Member seeking clarity regarding the verification of ballot papers being carried out by another authority, it was noted that it was common practice for other authorities across the country to verify the votes of another authority. It was explained that there may be implications for Doncaster in relation to the counting of votes and declaration of results due to the length of time taken by another authority to verify the ballot papers and then transport them to Doncaster.

RESOLVED to that the report on the 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review be noted.

6 URGENT ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 36 - TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO CANTLEY-WITH-BRANTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Committee received a report which provided confirmation of urgent action taken in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 36 in May, 2021, to appoint Councillors Jane Cox and Steve Cox on a temporary basis to Cantley-with- Branton Parish Council, for the purpose of attending a meeting to establish a quorum and enable the Parish Council to make the necessary appointments to its membership.

Where a Parish Council becomes inquorate, legislation and the Council's Constitution provides that the Council can appoint members on a temporary basis, to enable the Parish Council to carry out its normal business, until it had co-opted or elected sufficient Councillors to be quorate. In Doncaster, this function is delegated to the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee (EDSC), the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services).

Scott Fawcus, Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members of the situation that had arisen in Cantley-with-Branton Parish Council, where only one nomination was received in the uncontested Parish Council election. As there was only one member of the Parish Council and three members were required to establish a quorum, the Parish Council was not able to make the necessary co-options.

Therefore, as a consequence, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chair of EDSC had used his emergency powers in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 36 to appoint Councillors Jane Cox and Steve Cox on a temporary basis to Cantley-with-Branton Parish Council to enable the Parish Council to make the necessary co-options and would cease with immediate effect once the Parish Council had re-established a quorum.

Subsequently, Cantley-with-Branton Parish Council at its meeting on 11th June, 2021, appointed six co-opted members on to its membership and therefore, have re-gained a quorum to allow it to conduct its business.

RESOLVED that the urgent action in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 36, taken by the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services on 27th May, 2021, in consultation with the Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee, as outlined in the report, be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

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Doncaster Council

Report

23rd November 2021

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

By-Election and Neighbourhood Planning Referendum Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides members with detailed information and results of the Sprotbrough Neighbourhood Planning Referendum which took place on Thursday 15 July 2021.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. This report is for information only. The Committee is asked to note the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Having accessible and well-organised elections and Referendums are 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. Neighbourhood Planning Referendums allow local communities to influence and take more control of decisions around planning in their areas.

BACKGROUND

5. Elections and Referendums are significant projects, which are delivered by a small core team with polling stations supported by internal staff from across the Council.

Sprotbrough Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

6. A Neighbourhood Planning Referendum took place in the Central, East, Danum (exc a small area detailed in the plan), Park and Stonecross Parish Wards. The combined electorate was 6,042 electors of which 1,738 were postal voters and of those 603 postal votes (34.70%) were returned and personal identifiers correctly verified. A further 9 postal votes were rejected and those electors have been notified accordingly.
7. On polling day 170 (3.95%) electors cast their vote in the five polling stations, adding that to the 603 postal voters gave a total of 773 ballot papers verified and a total turnout of 12.79%.
8. The outcome of the Referendum was in favour of using the Neighbourhood Plan for Sprotbrough to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area and the result was reported to Full Council on 23 September 2021. A full breakdown of the results can be found below:

Results

9. The 'Question' asked in the referendum was:

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

	Number of Votes
Number of votes cast in favour of a 'YES'	633
Number of votes cast in favour of a 'NO'	138

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more than one answer	0
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D unmarked or void for uncertainty	2
Total	2

Electorate: 6,042	Ballot Papers Issued: 773	Turnout: 12.79 %
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10. **High Melton Parish Council – 4 November 2021**

A vacancy was also advertised and called by ten electors for High Melton Parish Council to fill the vacancy by holding an election. However, as there was only one nomination received, the election was uncontested and the candidate Martin Pick was automatically elected to the High Melton Parish Council.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11. Elections and Referendums are statutory functions and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

12. This report is primarily for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 13.

	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 • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	The Council has statutory duties to support and deliver elections and referendums

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SF Date: 11/11/2021]

15. The arrangements detailed in this report are designed to ensure compliance with a range of statutory duties including:
- Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006
 - Representation of the People Acts 1983, 1985 and 2000
 - Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013
 - The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012
 - Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PH Date: 11/11/2021]

16. The Council's Planning Department pay for the costs associated with a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum, which is then claimed back from Government. Any costs associated with Parish/Town Council By-elections are fully claimed back from them.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

17. Human Resources implications have not been requested.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

18. Technology implications have not been requested.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

19. Health implications have not been requested.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: TB Date: 11/11/21]

20. 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

21. N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. Previous EDSC reports.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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Doncaster Council

Report

23rd November 2021

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

ANNUAL CANVASS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update to Members on a number of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and the Annual Canvass.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Ensuring the Electoral Register is as up to date as possible and carrying out proactive electoral activity is key to public engagement to ensure residents are registered to enable them to vote when an election occurs.

BACKGROUND

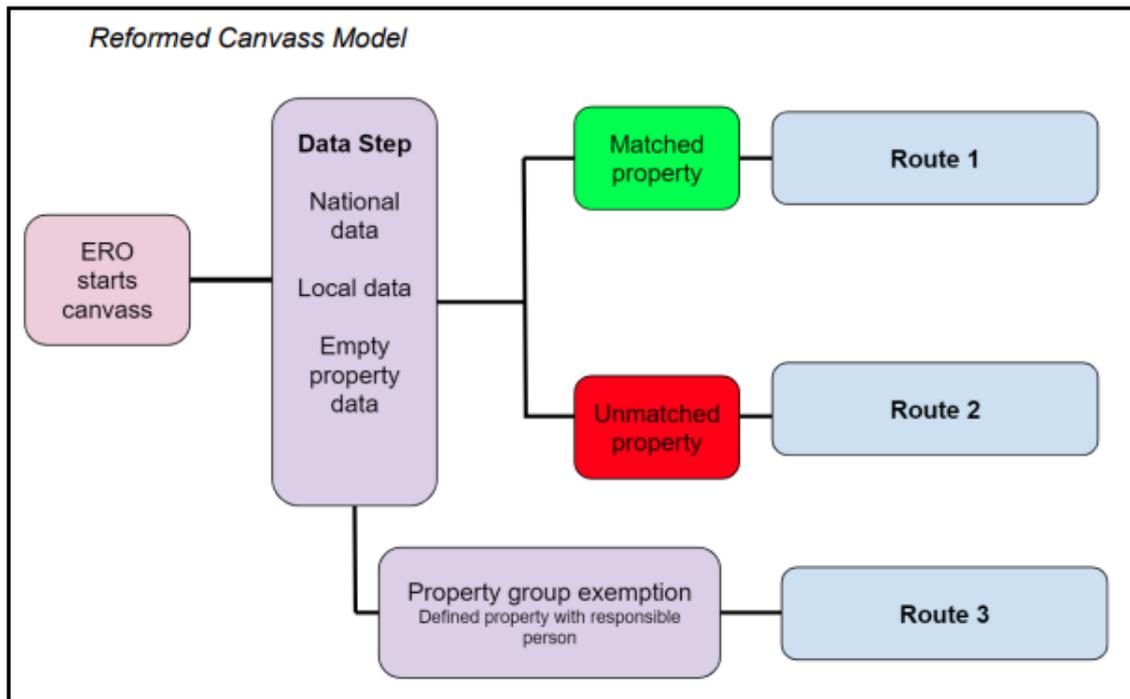
5. Each year the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) has a duty to carry out a full annual review of the Electoral Register by contacting all residential addresses to establish if the information currently held on the Electoral Register is complete and accurate, this is called the Annual Canvass. The purpose of the canvass is to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. This means identifying citizens who should be registered but are currently not, as well as identifying electors who are no longer at a property and should therefore be removed from the register. A revised version of the electoral register must be published by 1 December, following the conclusion of the annual canvass.

6. With the introduction of the canvass reforms last year, only properties where all the electors cannot be matched against national and/or local data are required to respond. The overall aim of canvass reform is to deliver a more efficient system by which Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) can maintain their electoral registers with no negative effect on citizens, or on the accuracy and completeness of the registers.

ANNUAL CANVASS ACTIVITY

7. The canvass will incorporate a 'data step' at the outset of the process. This will inform the ERO, based on the data available, which properties are likely to have an unchanged household composition, based on matching data on the electoral register against national Government data and, where relevant, locally held data sources. Local datasets are available to the ERO under their existing powers, provided by Regulations 23, 35 and 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001.
8. The ERO will then follow one of three routes for each property:
Route 1 - the matched properties route, this will be used for properties where the data indicates no change in household composition.
Route 2 - the unmatched properties route, this will be used for properties where data matching has highlighted that there may be a change to the information the ERO currently holds for the property.
Route 3 - These properties are defined as Care Homes and Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) all of which are required to provide an update on their current occupants.
9. Throughout June Electoral Services carried out the National Government data match and then attempted to match any remaining unsuccessful properties using local Council data such as Council Tax and Customer Services. This resulted in a total of 104,590 (74.20%) properties successfully matching and put into Route 1 and 36,319 unmatched properties put into Route 2.
10. All those electors in Route 1 properties were sent a notification letter advising them to make the necessary changes online or inform the ERO of their changes and we amend the electoral register accordingly. However, if all details are correct when we contact them they need not respond and they will not be chased several times like under the old canvass system.
11. All those in Route 2 that have not been successfully data matched will also be contacted, however all these properties will require a response and any non-responders will be chased and then personally canvassed via phone and/or visit.
12. A third route, **Route 3** - the defined properties route, will be available for property types which do not fit clearly within Routes 1 and 2. The characteristics of these property types mean that the ERO can more effectively and efficiently obtain information on residents using an alternative approach, where they are able to identify a 'responsible person' to provide the information in respect of all residents. Examples of these property types are care homes and student halls of residence. Should the ERO be unable to successfully obtain information about the property from a 'responsible person' they will need to canvass these property types using the Route 2

process.



Statistics

13. Route 1 - The National data matching process must take place between 1st June to 31st August 2021 and Electoral Services carried out the National data match download on 9th June 2021. At that time there was 140,966 properties and 225,197 registered electors in Doncaster and 101,701 (72.15%) properties and 192,885 (85.65%) electors successfully matched from the initial National data matching download for Route 1. Electoral Services managed to match a further 2,889 properties and 25,180 electors using the Councils local datasets and will continue to request data to establish further matches at Route 1. At present, we are currently at 104,590 (74.20%) of matched properties for Route 1 at the start of the Canvass.
14. Route 2 - These properties are the un-matched ones that do require a response. Under stage 1, we sent letters and e-mails to 28,674 properties of which 9,600 properties responded. Therefore for stage 2, we sent a Canvass forms to the outstanding 19,081 and received a further 2,850 responses back. This left approx. 16,200 properties still outstanding and requiring a personal door knock visit for stage 3. Canvassers are currently visiting these outstanding properties and are trying to obtain a response or accurate update for the ERO and so far a further 2,138 properties have responded giving a total response of 14,587 (50.88%) to Route 2 so far.
15. Route 3 – These properties are defined as Care Homes all of which are required to provide an update on their current occupants. The Electoral Services Team have been contacting these properties directly due to the high turn around in these types of properties to establish that everything is as up to date as possible, so far we have achieved a 80% response rate and personal visits will now take place in order in order to hope to gain a 100% response.

16. **Pro-active activity**

In line with Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission guidance, the ERO should look to carry out mitigating actions to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register. Therefore the Electoral Services team are now carrying out the following mitigating actions:

- Contact elector's via email, where an email address is held on the electoral register
- Contact elector's via telephone, where a phone number is held on the electoral register
- Data matching and data mining against Council records (Council Tax, Housing Benefit, customer services data etc)
- Additional Corporate Comms messages to encourage non-responders to respond.
- Reminder Canvass Forms (with pre-paid return envelopes, which were not previously sent) posted to non-responding properties where we hold no other form of contact details.
- Canvass forms (open and not enveloped) posted to properties when a canvasser has visited several times and not been able to obtain a response in the hope that they read it and respond knowing it's been hand delivered.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

17. Electoral Registration is a statutory function and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

18. All of the above are statutory duties and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. This report is primarily for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

19.

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	

<p>of Doncaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The Council has statutory duties to support elections and Electoral Registration.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

20. Every effort is made to drive Individual Electoral Registration to ensure the Council and the ERO meets the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards and complies with their legal duties.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SRF Date: 11/11/2021]

21. There are comprehensive statutory provisions covering the delivery of electoral registration activity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PH Date: 12/11/2021]

22. This work is funded from the Registration of Electors budget (NC003). The Cabinet Office usually provide an annual funding contribution, however this year they have advised due to the Canvass Reform, savings will be made and they will not be providing any funding. This is the case for almost every Council.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

23. Human Resources implications have not been requested.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

24. Technology implications have not been requested.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

25. Health implications have not been requested.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: TB Date: 11/11/2021]

26. The Council has a duty to ensure all eligible electors can register to vote easily and are provided with several options in order to do so. Registration information is also available in alternative languages, Braille and by video (YouTube) on the Council Web page.

CONSULTATION

27. N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

28. Previous EDSC reports.

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