



# Doncaster Council

## Report

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13<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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

**INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – PROGRESS REPORT**

### **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 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 Council has a duty to review its Electoral Register to ensure it is up to date by carrying out a full review and annual canvass, before publishing a new revised Electoral Register on the 1<sup>st</sup> December each year. As well as the annual canvass, ongoing Individual Electoral Registration proactive initiatives are needed to capture people moving properties, working with coroners to obtain death lists, capturing those upcoming 16 year olds or anyone changing their name.

## **Annual Canvass**

The annual canvass commenced in August 2017, at that point there were 137,706 properties in Doncaster and an electorate of 225,595. We received 79,144 (57.51%) responses to the initial Household Enquiry Form (HEF) without any prompting. Those responses came via the internet, post, text or telephone. A total of 58,562 HEF reminders were issued in September then a further 37,344 2<sup>nd</sup> stage reminders were issued in October. During September to November we carried out telephone canvassing as well as canvassers out door knocking the remaining outstanding non-responding properties.

Throughout the canvass approx. 13,073 'Invitation to Register' (ITR) forms for new applicants have been issued, these include any electors who may have moved. There were also 7,712 electors who we are currently investigating to ensure they should be removed from the register.

The final response to the 'Household Enquiry Form' was 118,017 (85.70%) properties. Which is slightly up on the past two years; a full breakdown by return method in comparison to 2015 and 2016 can be found at appendix A of this report.

## **Current Electoral Proactive Activity**

6. A proactive approach is 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 are on the register and that all non-eligible persons are removed. To ensure this is achieved we are currently carrying out the following initiatives:

### Household Enquiry Letter (HNL)

A HNL is a letter detailing all residents which live at a property and asks if any of the information is incorrect to contact electoral services to update the electoral register or go on-line and register to vote. 19,735 HNLs were sent out in February to any new properties added to the Electoral Register since 1<sup>st</sup> December and all those non-responding properties to the annual canvass HEF.

### 'Invitation to Register' (ITR) Canvass

There are still approx. 3,201 names on the Electoral Register which are not yet fully registered. In order for them to register we still require their personal identifiers; national insurance number and date of birth. They have received three reminder letters and the next stage will be to carry out personal visits to their property.

### Home movers

Working with the Council Tax department we are contacting any new home movers and encouraging/reminding them to remember to change their address on the Electoral Register.

### Contact Centre and one stop shop reception

The Contact Centre and the one-stop-shop in the Civic Office are asking customers if they are on the electoral register and advising them to register to vote for the upcoming election. They have a web based version of the electoral register which allows them to check if someone is registered, apply

for postal vote or register them there and then. This is encouraging people to register and help raise awareness of the upcoming election taking place on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

7. As of the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the full electorate was 222,937 and a full electorate breakdown by ward is provided at Appendix B.

**OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

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

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

9. This report is primarily for information only.

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

- 10.

	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Implications</b>
	<p><b>Doncaster Working:</b> 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"> <li>• Better access to good fulfilling work</li> <li>• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish</li> <li>• Inward Investment</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Living:</b> 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"> <li>• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster</li> <li>• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home</li> <li>• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport</li> <li>• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean</li> <li>• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Learning:</b> 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"> <li>• Every child has life-changing</li> </ul>	

	<p>learning experiences within and beyond school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better</li> <li>• Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Caring:</b> Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust</li> <li>• Older people can live well and independently in their own homes</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Connected Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, efficient and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Modern, accessible customer interactions</li> <li>• Operating within our resources and delivering value for money</li> <li>• A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents</li> <li>• Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths</li> <li>• Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</li> </ul>	<p>The Council has statutory duties to support elections</p>

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

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

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SRF Date 2/3/18]**

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

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials AT Date 05/03/18]**

13. The Cabinet Office provided the Council with £59k for 2017/18 towards the cost of Individual Electoral Registration. Electoral Services also completed an application for a further £41k of funding (Justification Led Bid) which is awaiting Ministers approval. However, the Cabinet Office has indicated it

will likely be approved. These allocations are expected to allow a break-even position for the registration of electors for 2017/18.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14. N/A

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

15. N/A

## **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

16. N/A

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials TB Date 01/03/18]**

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

## **CONSULTATION**

18. N/A

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

19. Previous EDSC reports.

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