



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.

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