



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 8th February 2022

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

2022 ELECTIONS UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On Thursday 5 May 2022, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (previously known as Sheffield City Region) will elect a Mayor for the second time, for a four year term. This report provides a detailed update to Members on the preparations for this upcoming election.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. N/A

RECOMMENDATION

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. Having accessible and well organised elections is key to public engagement in the democratic process.

BACKGROUND

5. The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) is a formal partnership of councils that shapes policy and leads on decision-making. Formed in 2014, the constituent members of the Mayoral Combined Authority are Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster councils. The councils of Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales and Bolsover are 'non-constituent' members.
6. The SYMCA Mayor is a major figure in the political life of the area. They act as an ambassador for the area; promoting it as a place to live, work, visit and invest in. The Mayor is Chair of the Mayoral Combined Authority and a member of the South Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The

Mayor and the other Leaders of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority work with the LEP, central government and other organisations in pursuing shared goals and delivering key strategic plans. The Mayor has certain public transport powers relating to how buses may operate in the future.

7. Further information regarding the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority or the role of the South Yorkshire Mayor is available via the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority web page <https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/Election>
8. Like Doncaster's elected Mayor the supplementary voting system is used, which means electors will have two votes in this election – one for their first choice candidate and one, if they wish to use it, for their second choice candidate
9. The terms of reference of this Committee provide for an overview of Electoral Services issues. Set out below is the current position in respect of recent and current activity.

Preparations for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Election

10. Preparations are underway for the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Election taking place on Thursday 5 May 2022. Polling hours will be the usual 7.00am to 10.00pm.
11. Dave Smith, the Chief Executive of SYMCA is the Returning Officer for the election, with Damian Allen the Council's Chief Executive acting as Local Returning Officer for Doncaster.
12. The Verification and Count of all ballot papers will take place on Friday 6 May 2022 at Doncaster Racecourse. Arrangements for recruiting staff will commence early February for all positions on polling stations, postal vote opening and count. Electoral Services will work closely with the Council's Director of Public Health to ensure that staff and electors are Covid-secure and that we comply with good practice and any Covid restrictions which in place at the time.
13. All our usual Polling Stations have been contacted and we are beginning to receive completed booking confirmation letters along with our Covid-19 risk assessment questionnaires. Some have raised concerns and we are working closely with them to see if we can resolve the issues, in the meantime electoral services are carrying out searches within polling districts to see if there are any suitable replacements and back-ups.

Appendix A provides a draft list of polling stations currently under review and the proposed changes to our usual polling station or different from the one used last year. However, all polling stations have not been confirmed at this point and this list may change. Once suitable arrangements have been sourced members will be notified of the final proposals.

Any new polling stations will be highlighted on polling cards notifying those effected electors of a temporary change to their previous polling station on this occasion. The usual polling station finder on the Councils website will be updated with these changes. The 'find my polling station' app allows

electors to search for their polling station by typing in their post code or address and not only will details of their polling station pop up they will be given a map and directions on how to get there from their home address. The 'find my polling station' app address is also provided to all electors on their polling cards.

14. The following Council web page has been updated with key information for electors; information will be updated regularly along with any notices once published:

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/south-yorkshire-mayoral-combined-authority-election>

15. A timetable of key dates is provided at Appendix B.

BY-ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUMS

16. **High Melton Parish Council**

Due to resignation a vacancy occurred and was advertised for a Parish Councillor in High Melton. Doncaster Council received the necessary request from at least ten electors within the Parish to fill the vacancy by election. Therefore, nominations open on Friday 11 February and close on Friday 18 February, if contested the election will take place on Thursday 17 March 2022.

At present there are 219 registered electors in High Melton of which 66 are postal voters. Should the election be contested there will be one polling station. The cost of this election will be charged to High Melton Parish Council.

Further information can be found on the Councils web page by visiting:
<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/high-melton-parish-council-by-election>

17. **Rossington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum**

The report of the Independent Examination of the Rossington Neighbourhood Development Plan prepared by Independent Examiner, Nigel McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI has been received and recommends that the Neighbourhood Plan should, subject to the recommended modifications, proceed to Referendum based on the Neighbourhood Area as approved by the Council (Rossington Parish Boundary). Further information on the Development plan can be found on the Councils Planning web page by visiting:

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/planning/rossington-neighbourhood-development-plan>

Therefore, the Rossington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum (NPR) is scheduled to take place on Thursday 17 March 2022, the information statement and supporting documents will be published on Monday 7 February 2022. There are currently 10,482 electors within the Neighbourhood Planning area, of which 2,880 are postal voters and there will be six polling stations across the area for electors to cast their vote in. The costs associated with the NPR are claimed back by the Planning Department from Central Government.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND 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 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 	<p>The Council has statutory duties to support elections.</p> <p>By ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to deliver well-run elections and improving our reputation by meeting the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

20. Sufficient resources will need to be made available to administer the Election in order to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duties detailed above. Ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to deliver well-run elections improve our reputation and meet the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SRF Date: 28/01/2022]

21. The arrangements detailed in this report are designed to ensure compliance with a range of statutory duties including:
- The Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (Amendment) Orders 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019
 - Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006
 - Representation of the People Acts 1983, 1985 and 2000
 - Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PH Date: 28/01/2022]

22. All costs associated with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Election are recharged to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. The maximum recoverable amount allocated to Doncaster is £417,841 and it is not expected to exceed this amount.

23. The cost of any Parish Council By-Elections are re-charged to the Parish Council and any Neighbourhood Planning Referendums are re-charged to Central Government by the Councils Planning Department.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

24. Human Resources implications have not been requested.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

25. Technology implications have not been requested.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

26. Health implications have not been requested.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: TB Date 28/01/2022]

27. The Council has a duty to ensure Elections 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

28. N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

29. 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