



# City of Doncaster Council

## Report

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**Date: 7 February 2023**

**To: The Chair and Members of the**

### **ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE**

**Report Title: Canvass Update**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision?</b>
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	All	No

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. This report provides members with an update on the final outcome of the Annual Canvass and a detailed breakdown of the statistics for each Route and final electorate by ward.

### **EXEMPT REPORT**

2. This report is not exempt.

### **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?**

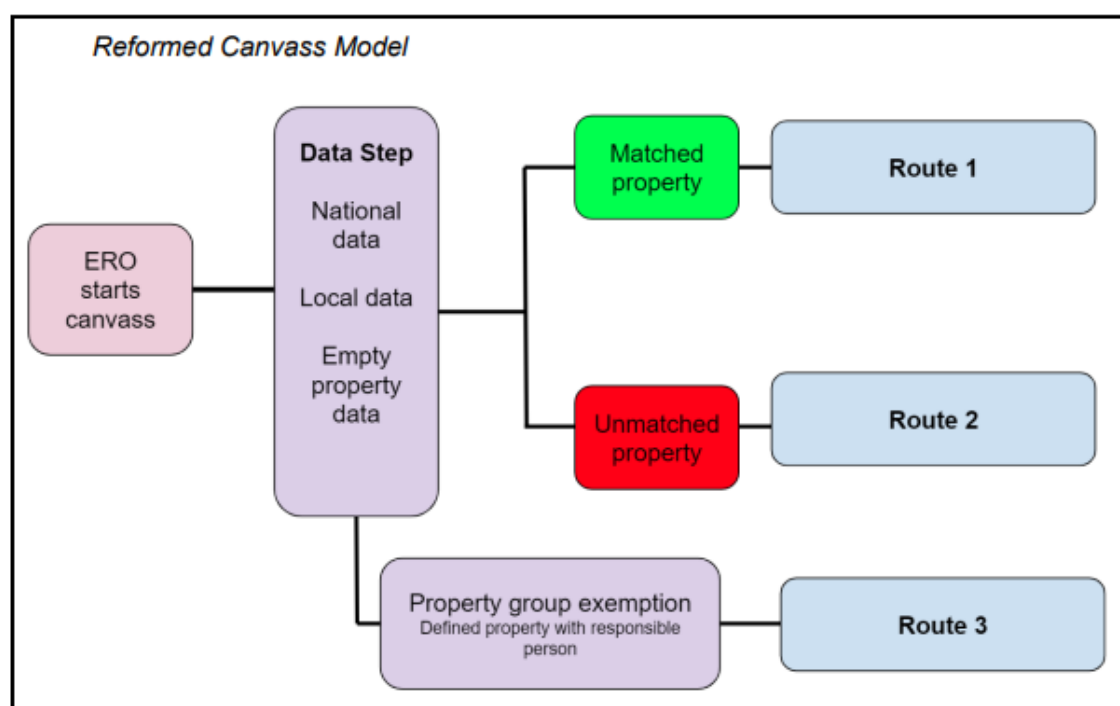
4. Ensuring the Electoral Register is as up to date as possible and carrying out proactive electoral activity is key to public engagement to ensure residents are registered to enable them to vote when an election occurs.

### **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 December 1<sup>st</sup> each year, following the conclusion of the annual canvass.

6. With the introduction of the canvass reforms in 2020, 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.
7. The canvass incorporates a 'data step' at the outset of the process. This informs 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 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.

### **Route 1**

9. The National data matching process must take place between 1 June to 31 August 2022 and Electoral Services carried out the National data match download on 23 June 2022 and were provided with the results on 27 June 2022. There were 227,383 registered electors and 142,519 properties in Doncaster and 110,867 (77.79%) properties successfully matched from the initial National data matching download for Route 1.
10. Electoral Services managed to obtain confirmation from 23,148 Route 1 properties reducing the number of letters needing to be sent to Route 1 properties from 110,867 letters to 87,719 letters. Letters were sent to those 87,719 properties on 16 August 2022 advising residents to contact us, only if the information we currently hold is incorrect.

### **Route 2**

11. These properties are the un-matched properties that do require a response. Under stage 1, we sent letters and e-mails to 31,551 properties and 7,975 (25.29%) properties responded. 23,551 properties were sent Route 2, stage 2 forms which required a response and 3,634 (15.43%) properties responded. Leaving 19,912 properties remained outstanding and required a personal visit under stage 3, foot canvassers began door knocking w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> October and finished by 23<sup>rd</sup> November, along with electoral services data mining to try to obtain a response from those remaining non-responding properties. At the close of stage 3 a further 6,120 (30.74%) responses were obtained. Overall for all three stages the total return rate was 17,729 (56.23%) responses for Route 2.

### **Route 3**

12. These properties are defined as Care Homes, all of which are required to provide an update on their current occupants. The Electoral Services Team contacted all Care Homes directly due to the high turn around in these types of properties to establish that everything is as up to date as possible. We were able to obtain a response from all care homes achieving a 100% response rate for route 3.

### **Breakdown**

13. The overall response rate for all three Routes including those who did not need to respond was 90.27% which is ever so slightly down on last year's return. A breakdown per year can be found below:

Year	Responses received at the end of Canvass	% of Responded properties at end of Canvass	Number of properties outstanding
2022	128,652	90.27%	13,802
2021	129,483	91.85%	11,483
2020*	132,801	94.67%	7,479
2019*	117,000	84.20%	21,948
2018	119,859	86.42%	18,836
2017	118,017	85.70%	19,698
2016	112,364	82.87%	23,230

\*2019 Canvass was ended early due to snap Parliamentary election on 12 December 2019

\*2020 Canvass no foot canvass carried out due to Covid

14. Although the annual canvass has concluded, we are still sending Invitation to Register (ITR) forms to individuals where we only have a name and address but no personal information (DOB & NINO) which were identified during the annual canvass. There were 1,261 Invitation to Register (ITRs) forms sent out w/c 16<sup>th</sup> January by e-mail and paper forms (where we don't hold an e-mail address).

15. The 2022 annual canvass has been completed and the revised Electoral Register was published on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 ensuring the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) met their statutory duty. The new Electorate as of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 was 224,636 electors and 58,331 Postal Voters. A detailed breakdown of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 electorate by ward including postal vote breakdown is provided at **Appendix A** of this report.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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









## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

17. This report is primarily for information only.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

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Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
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 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Promoting the borough and its</b>				✓

<b>cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>				
Comments:				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
The Council has a duty to ensure all eligible electors can register to vote and respond to canvass forms easily and are provided with several ways in order to do so. Registration information is also available in alternative languages, Braille and by video (YouTube) link on the Council Web page.				

### **Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 26/01/2023]**

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

- Representation of the People Act
- The Representation of the People (England & Wales) Regulations
- The Representation of the People (Annual Canvass Amendment) Regulations
- Local Government Act
- Electoral Registration and Administration Act

### **Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 26/01/2023]**

20. This work is funded solely from the Registration of Electors budget (NC003). Central Government no longer provide Councils with funding towards the annual canvass due to the reduction in the cost of delivering the Canvass under the Canvass Reforms.

### **Human Resources Implications**

21. There are no Human Resources Implications arising from this report.

### **Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 26/01/2023 ]**

22. The 'Electoral Automated Service' is used to allow electors to respond to canvass communication anytime via an automated service; on-line, text, phone or e-mail rather than just by the more expensive option of return post. The Technology Governance Board (TGB) approved a request to renew the contract for this service to 31/08/24, in line with the contract for the Xpress Electoral Management Software. The Gov.UK Notify solution is also used for emailing electors in relation to the annual canvass.

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

23. 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.

## **CONSULTATION**

24. Not applicable

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

25. Previous EDSC reports.

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

26.

ERO	Electoral Registration Officer
TGB	Technology Governance Board
ITR	Invitation to Register
NINO	National Insurance Number
DOB	Date of Birth

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

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