



# City of Doncaster Council

## Report

---

Date: 21 November 2023

To: The Chair and Members of the

### ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Report Title: Canvass Update

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Cllr Jane Nightingale, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	All	No

### 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 preparations for the start of the Annual Canvass.

### 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?

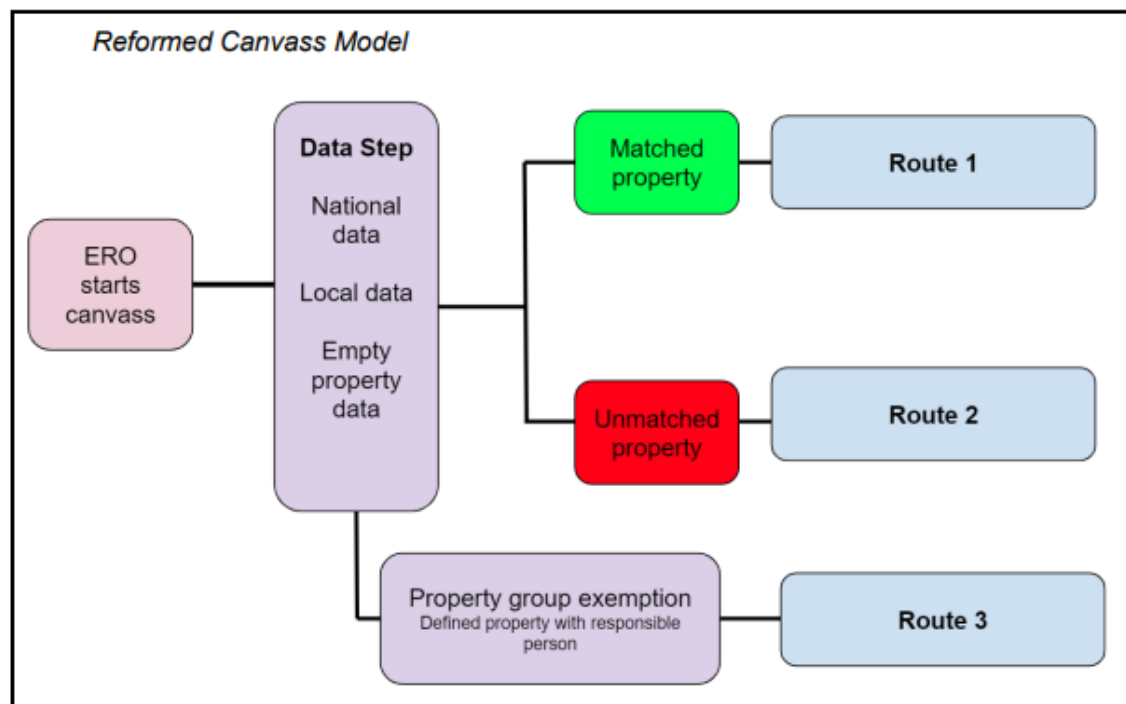
4. Ensuring the Electoral Register is as up to date as possible and carrying out proactive electoral activity is key to public engagement to ensure residents are registered to enable them to vote when an election occurs.

### 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 or 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 2023 and Electoral Services carried out the National data match download on 26 June 2023. There were 225,282 registered electors and 146,455 properties in Doncaster and 85.67% of electors and 111,010 (75.79%) properties successfully matched from the initial national data matching download for Route 1.
10. Electoral Services did a data mining exercise in order to try to match any further properties and electors using the Councils local datasets and will continue to request data to establish further matches at Route 1, any outstanding unmatched properties will be put into Route 2 who will later be sent letters and e-mails asking for an updated response. A further 11,828 electors have been matched from Council Tax records and a further 400 properties.

#### **Route 2**

11. These properties are the un-matched properties that do require a response. Under Route 2 - Stage 1, we sent letters and e-mails to 33,357 properties and 7,032 (21.08%) properties responded. A further 26,325 reminder letters were sent out for Route 2 - Stage 2, w/c 9<sup>th</sup> October and we received a further 4,404 (16.73%) responses. Leaving the remaining 21,921 outstanding properties for Route 2 - stage 3 requiring a personal visit. Canvassers are currently visiting these outstanding properties and are trying to obtain a response or accurate update for the ERO to be able to publish an accurate up-to-date electoral register on the 1<sup>st</sup> December.

#### **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 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 96.08% response rate and personal visits will now take place in order to ensure a 100% response.
13. Despite a later than normal start to the Annual Canvass due to the Tender award of a new Electoral Printer, Electoral Services are on track to complete in time for the ERO to publish the revised Electoral Register on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**



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



## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

15. This report is primary for information only.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

16.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <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 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: 10/11/2023]**

17. 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: CR | Date: 10/11/2023]**

18. 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**

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

## **Technology Implications**

20. Technology implications have not been requested

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

21. 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**

22. Not applicable

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

23. Previous EDSC reports.

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

24.

ERO	Electoral Registration Officer
HMO	Homes of Multiple Occupancy

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Trina Barber, Electoral Services Manager  
Legal & Democratic Services

Tel: 01302 734398

E-mail: [trina.barber@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:trina.barber@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Damian Allen**

**Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer**