

15th March 2016

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

ELECTORAL SERVICES UPDATE ON KEY ISSUES REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update to Members on preparations for Police and Crime Commissioner Election on 5th May 2016 and EU Referendum on 23rd June 2016.

RECOMMENDATION

2. 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?

3. Having accessible and well organised elections is key to public engagement in the democratic process. We expect a great interest from the public and a high turnout for the EU Referendum.

BACKGROUND

4. The Terms of Reference of this Committee provide an overview of Electoral Services issues. Set out below is the current position in respect of recent and current activity.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTION

5. The Election for a South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner will take place on Thursday 5th May 2016 with the usual hours of poll 7.00am – 10.00pm.
6. Barnsley Council are the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) in charge for South Yorkshire and will collate the votes given from the four Local Authorities. However, each Local Returning Officer will verify and count locally and the information will be communicated to the PARO at various stages in accordance with the agreed protocol. Regular meetings have been scheduled by the PARO and key officers from the four Local Authorities. Our Local Returning Officer has also scheduled regular meetings with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Electoral Services Interim Team Leader and other key officers.
7. The Verification of ballot papers will take place on Thursday 5th May 2016 at Doncaster Racecourse, following the close of poll. The Counting of ballot papers will commence on Friday 6th May at 9.30am.

8. Arrangements for appointing staff are underway and as far as possible, staff that we employ on polling stations will not be engaged on the Thursday evening Verification or Friday's Count.
9. All polling stations have been booked and confirmed with the following new polling stations identified. These new polling stations will be highlighted on polling cards notifying electors of a change to their previous polling place.
 - Hexthorpe and Balby North Ward – Balby Community Library has been designated as the new polling place for polling district AA replacing Balby Youth Centre which is due to be disposed of by the Council.
 - Torne Valley Ward – Tickhill Cricket Club has been designated as the new polling place for polling district ID replacing Tickhill Parish Rooms. The new polling place is more central for the electors in polling district ID and the facilities are accessible with ramps and a car park.
 - Wheatley Hills and Intake Ward – a portable unit has been designated as the new polling place for polling district DI replacing The Info Shop and Community Centre as the premises has been converted into a café and is no longer suitable. A site visit has taken place and no other suitable polling place was identified.

There will also be a polling station finder on the council's website. This will allow electors to search for their polling station by typing in a post code or address and they will be given their polling station location, map and directions of how to get there from their home address.

EU REFRENDUM

10. David Cameron has announced a referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Union to be held on Thursday 23rd June 2016, with the usual hours of poll 7.00am – 10.00pm.

The Electoral Commission proposed the wording, which has been accepted by MPs as: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" the options for voters will be 'remain a member of the European Union' and 'leave the European Union'
11. Leeds City Council is the Regional Counting Officer for Yorkshire and The Humber Region and will collate the votes. However, each Local Counting Officer will verify and count locally and the information will be communicated to Leeds at various stages in accordance with the agreed protocol. Briefing meetings have been scheduled by Leeds to keep the region updated.
12. The Verification and counting of ballot papers will take place at Doncaster Racecourse on Thursday 23rd June 2016 at the close of poll and throughout the night.
13. Arrangements for appointing staff are already underway and as far as possible, staff that we employ on polling stations will not be engaged on the Thursday evening Count.
14. The booking of Polling Stations are also underway and it is proposed as far

a possible that the same polling stations being used for the Police and Crime Commissioner election are also used for the EU Referendum in order to not cause any confusion to Electors.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

15. 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 PRIORITIES

16.

| | Priority | Implications |
|--|---|---|
| | We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership. | 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. |

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

17. Sufficient resources will need to be made available to run two Elections so close together and to continue to drive individual registration in order to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duties detailed above.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. 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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19. The costs of both the Police and Crime Commissioner and EU Referendum elections will be claimed from Government.

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTRIBUTORS

Trina Barber
Interim Team Leader
Electoral Services
Legal & Democratic Services
Tel: 01302 724398
E-mail: Trina.Barber@doncaster.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous EDSC reports

Jo Miller
Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer