

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

ANNUAL CANVASS UPDATE

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 Annual Canvass.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Committee is asked to approve the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

2016 Annual Canvass – as of 14th November 2016

4. The annual canvass commenced in August 2016, at that point there were 135,650 properties in Doncaster and an electorate of 223,711. We received 41,754 (31%) responses to the initial Household Enquiry Form (HEF) without any prompting. Those responses came via the internet, post, text or telephone. A total of 65,709 HEF reminders were issued in September then a further 41,427 2nd stage reminders were issued in October. During September to November canvassers were out door knocking the remaining outstanding 37,319 non-responding properties. To date we have received a total of 106,152 (78.29%) responses which is better than last year's final total response of 96,659 (71.58%) properties.
5. The current Electorate as of 14th November 2016 is 227,388 although we are in the middle of the annual canvass therefore these numbers will change as people register, are removed or move out of the borough. We currently have 674 applicants with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) awaiting verification and since the start of the canvass we have also issued to date 13,019 'Invitation to Register' (ITR) forms for new applicants. There are also 7,878 electors who we are currently investigating to ensure they should be removed from the register and 487 unconfirmed electors which we are trying to obtain further information for in order to register them.
6. We will be doing what we can to encourage all of the above to turn into actual verified electors by doing a telephone canvass and personal visit to any non-responding HEF and ITR forms and processing the information instantly and sending it to DWP for verification. Any queries returned from DWP will be investigated quickly to try and turn them to a verified elector.

7. **Breakdown of HEF responses by date and method compared to 2015**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Properties</u>	<u>Total Retn</u>	<u>Total% Retn Rate</u>	<u>Outstanding Forms</u>	<u>Retns by Post</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Web</u>	<u>SMS</u>	<u>ERS Retn Total</u>	<u>% ERS</u>	<u>2015 total returns</u>	<u>2015 total % return rate</u>
17-Aug	135650	41,754	31.00%	93,875	21,859	6,648	8,704	4,498	19,850	14.63%		
23-Aug	135650	52,035	38.35%	83,615	30,040	7,160	9,854	4,912	21,926	16.16%	50,609	37.49%
26-Aug	135634	69,902	51.55%	65,709	47,202	7,332	10,196	5,056	22,584	16.65%	52,273	38.70%
5-Sep	135638	71,852	52.98%	63,758	47,806	7,644	10,915	5,371	23,930	17.64%	58,109	43.03%
12-Sep	135638	77,571	57.19%	58,039	50,372	8,425	12,030	6,580	27,035	19.93%	59,378	43.97%
19-Sep	135632	90,206	66.50%	45,398	58,030	9,361	14,238	8,275	31,874	23.50%		
26-Sep	135633	94,176	69.45%	41,427	61,140	9,500	14,667	8,509	32,676	24.10%		
3-Oct	135632	95,658	70.54%	39,944	61,928	9,619	15,013	8,723	33,355	24.59%		
10-Oct	135641	99,017	73.02%	36,584	64,752	9,693	15,261	8,896	33,850	24.95%		
24-Oct	135639	99,952	73.71%	35,647	65,540	9,713	15,333	8,939	33,985	25.05%	83,018	61.45%
7-Nov	135644	103,806	76.55%	31,792	68,857	9,766	15,548	9,136	34,450	25.39%	84,220	62.37%
10-Nov	135645	105,194	77.58%	30,403	70,049	9,795	15,632	9,193	34,620	25.52%	85,745	63.50%
14-Nov	135645	106,152	78.29%	29,444	70,783	9,825	15,740	9,263	34,828	25.67%	88,748	65.72%
21-Nov												
28-Nov											96,659	71.58%

8. To help increase the response to the annual canvass and increase the number of electors on the register we are currently being proactive by:

Telephone Canvassing

Due to the success of last year we are undertaking a Telephone Canvass alongside the door knock canvass. This enables us to contact those hard to reach areas/electors. We are now focussing on an ITR canvass to chase up the non-responding electors to try and obtain the information there and then over the phone; we also have a dedicated phone line for electors to call us back with their information should they not have it to hand.

Care Homes & HMO's

We have dedicated Canvass Team Leaders which are canvassing every care home and housing with multiple occupancies (HMO) within the borough by arranging an appointment with the Care Manager and/or Building Manager to build up a close working relationship to ensure we are kept up to date on the frequent residential changes.

Targeting hard to reach/unapproachable areas

Where necessary extra support and time has been given to selective areas such as foreign nationals that may not understand how to complete the form. SLHD have provided access to high rise flats and buildings. We have also targeted hard to reach areas by telephone.

School/Colleges

We are campaigning within Schools and Colleges through their social media links by providing schools with adverts and information to put on their social media to try and increase the number of attainers ready for when they reach voting age. We currently have 2,960 on the register.

Social Media

The web team update social media and re-tweet information out to Doncaster residents from the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office.

#OurDay

Electoral Services will also be taking part in the Local Government Association #OurDay - we will submit a team selfie whilst carrying out Telephone Canvassing on the 15th November. This will capture the team working hard and also promoting and encouraging register-to-vote and responding to household enquiry forms.

9. The work undertaken during the annual canvass will contribute to the annual Electoral Register that will be published on the 1st December 2016.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Cabinet Office are continuing to supply funding for electoral registration activity.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous Elections and Democratic Structures Committee reports

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