

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

18 NOVEMBER 14

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

ELECTION AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE

1 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To allow Members to consider and note the Elections performance and performance standards.

2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **The Committee consider and note the contents of the report.**

3 **KEY ISSUES**

3.1 **Individual Electoral Registration (IER)**

Individual Electoral Registration went live on the 10th June 2014. From this date electors were able to register on line via the IERSD. The onus has now moved from the basis of registering from the household annual canvass form to the individual being responsible for their registration. There is still the facility for an individual to fill in a form rather than go on line should they not have access to the internet.

3.2 **Confirmation Live Run**

Confirmation live runs across Councils within England and Wales (Scotland were not doing theirs until after the Referendum) commenced on the 13th June 2014. Melton's live run date was on the 1st July 2014. We did have an initial connection problem but this was at the Cabinet Office end, so our initial data didn't go until the next day. Our data was successfully retrieved back four days later and we achieved a match rate of 81.023% which was slightly higher than our initial run. We then carried out local data matching using Council Tax records and pushed the match rate up to 90%.

3.3 **Transitional Canvass**

The canvass for 2014 is based upon the information with the confirmation dry run. Confirmation Letters were sent to the 90% of electors who matched following the dry run and then further local data matching. Invites to register were sent to the 20% of electors who did not match and a further 2000 Household Enquiry Forms were sent to the empty properties within the Borough. We are now moving towards the end of this transitional canvass with the canvassers about to visit the electors and households who have not returned their forms.

3.4 **European Parliamentary Election**

This Election was held on the 22nd May 2014 to elect 5 members to the European Parliament for the East Midland Region. The RO for the Region was David Cook from Kettering, so Melton Borough Council administered this election on his

behalf. Regular meetings were attended by both the Local Returning Officer and the Elections Officer. The Elections Officer also worked closely with the other authorities within Leicestershire and Rutland to cover best practice and continuity.

The election ran smoothly and efficiently with the verification being held on the Thursday night and the count taking place on Sunday 25th May to coincide with the majority of Europe voting on the Sunday. We were in a position to put our result through to the central count at Kettering 9.00pm and this was accepted by the Returning Officer before 10.00pm

3.5 Borough and Parish By Elections

We have a By Election planned to fill the vacancy within the Asfordby Ward on the 27th November 2014

Parishes

Asfordby PC – We have had two parish by elections for this Parish Council. They have also had two other casual vacancies that have not gone to election.

Bottesford PC – We have had one by election for this parish. They also have one vacancy where an election has been called where no nominations have been put forward and they have also had a further 4 vacancies that have not had an election requested that they have filled by co-option.

There has also been a number of other parish councils who have had casual vacancies that have been filled by co-option.

3.6 Annual Canvass 2013/14

The canvass was delayed due to the Confirmation live run so did not commence until the 1st October 2013 and the publication date was delayed until the 17th February 2014. There were no problems during the canvass, but the canvassers did report that they found carrying out the door to door visits to non-responders harder to make during the months of December and January.

Our percentage return was 92% the same as the previous year.

3.7 The Future

a) Parliamentary Election

Melton will lead for this election with the Mayor being Returning Officer and the Chief Executive being the Acting Returning Officer. The date for the parliamentary election is now set for the 7th May 2015. There has been a change in legislation to make the dates for any further parliamentary elections fixed.

Planning is now taking place where we are working with our cross boundary partners at Rutland County Council and Harborough District Council.

b) Borough and Parish Elections – 7th May 2015

Full Elections for all 16 Borough Ward and 26 Parish Councils will be taking place on the same day as the Parliamentary Election.

Council Tax and Neighbourhood Planning Referendums

2015 could see these referendums taking place within the Borough.

Performance Standards

a) Electoral Registration

3.8

Canvass 2013/14

	Performance standard	Assessment
Completeness and accuracy of electoral registration records	1 Using information sources to verify entries on the register of electors and identify potential new electors	Above the standard
	2 Maintaining the property database	Above the standard
	3 House to house enquiries	Meeting the standard
Integrity	4 Maintaining the integrity of registration and absent vote applications	Above the standard
	5 Supply and security of the register and absent voter lists	Above the standard
Participation	6 Public awareness strategy	Above the standard
	7 Working with partners	Above the standard
	8 Accessibility and communication of information	Above the standard
Planning and organisation	9 Planning for rolling registration and annual canvass	Above the standard
	10 Training	Above the standard

b) Individual Electoral Registration

The final Performance Standards are not in place for IER but we have had to complete transitional standards for our readiness for IER.

October 13 – we submitted our Public Engagement Strategy to the electoral Commission as the only Performance Standard that is in place at present.

Throughout the lead up to going live on the 10th June 2014 we were required to update The Cabinet Officer IER Portal with our progress. We met all of the deadlines that were required.

c) European Parliamentary Election

We had no Performance Standards from the Electoral Commission to fill in for this

Election. We did however complete monthly Progress Reports for the Returning Officer. All of these were completed satisfactorily.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Elections and Electoral registration is governed by Legislation.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no Financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 Elections and Electoral Registration is run in line with the relevant legislation.

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no community safety issues directly arising from this report.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

8.1 There are no equality issues directly arising from this report.

9.0 **RISKS**

9.1 There are no direct risks related to this report.

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 There is no requirement for consultation on this matter.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All Wards

Contact Officer Angela Tebbutt / Sally Renwick
Date: November 2014
Appendices : None
Background
Papers:
Reference : X: Committees/Governance/2013/14