

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2016

### REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

#### ELECTION AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Committee consider and note the contents of the report.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee agree to the setting up of a Sub Committee as required to consider and make decisions regarding the Boundary Review in line with para 4.1 of this report**

#### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

#### 3.1 Individual Electoral Registration

The first full canvass was carried out between August 2015 and November 2015 with the new Register of Electors being published on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

Each household was sent a Household Enquiry Form (HEF). Any new electors who were to be added were then sent an Invite to Register (ITR) which they had to either fill in manually or they could use the digital portal to submit it.

The number of new registrations received since the publication of the new register is over 3500. During the 6 weeks leading up to the PCC election we received 1139 application and from the beginning of May until the 23<sup>rd</sup> June we received over 2100, with over 75% of these coming through the digital portal. In the days leading up to the EU referendum we were downloading up to 200 applications a day. On the 8<sup>th</sup> June which was due to have been the deadline for the last day to register for the EU Referendum the digital portal crashed and this lead to the extension of the registration deadline. This did lead to extra work that was not anticipated and the diversion of staff to help with the numbers received.

#### 3.2 Police and Crime Commissioners Election- 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016

This election was administered on behalf of the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO), at North West Leicestershire. The planning and administration of this election ran very smoothly.

Polling day was not particularly busy but with an overall turnout of 17.98%, it was larger than the previous PCC elections.

The verification was carried out on the Thursday evening and the Count took place on the afternoon of Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May. As the PCC was run under the Supplementary Vote system, the ballot did go to a second count with the second

count result being submitted at approximately 4.30 pm and the overall declaration of result being posted at 5.00 pm.

### 3.3 **Melton Egerton Ward By Election – 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

A by election was held on the same day as the PCC election for the Melton Egerton Ward. We had a total of five candidates. This by election affected two polling stations in the town. Everything ran smoothly and the verification of the count was held on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> May.

### 3.4 **EU Referendum – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016**

Whilst it was known that referendum was to be held by the end of 2017 there was some surprise at the announcement in February 2016 that this would be held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016. This announcement did impact on the Elections and Electoral Registration section during the run up to the PCC election in May.

Jenny Watson of The Electoral Commission was the Chief Counting Officer with the Regional Counting Officer (RCO) being the Chief Executive of Kettering Borough Council.

The election was very busy with an increased demand for postal and proxy votes.

Election day ran smoothly with the polling stations doing brisk business.

The verification and the count took place at the close of poll with Melton's result going through to Kettering at 4.30 am on the 24<sup>th</sup> June.

### 3.5 **Leicestershire County Council Boundary Review**

The Boundary Commission for England have completed their Review of the boundaries for the divisions within Leicestershire County Council. The outcomes for the four divisions within Melton Borough Council are as follows:-

Melton North and Melton South have been abolished and we now have two Divisions called Melton East and Melton West with the boundaries now running down the centre to the town area but with the exception of part of Sysonby ward being kept in the Melton East Area. The rural wards have also been changed to take part of Belvoir into the newly named Melton Wolds division, previously Asfordby Division. Any new electoral arrangements will come into force for the Leicestershire County Council Elections in 2017.

Members may recall that the previous Sub Committee of this Committee suggested the title of the Melton Wolds Division to the Boundary Commission, which was accepted.

## 4 **The Future**

### 4.1 **Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review**

The Boundary Commission for England commenced a review of Parliamentary constituencies in England in February 2016. The initial proposals will be published on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016. There then follows a 12 week

consultation period. Any new Parliamentary constituency boundaries will come into force for the Parliamentary Elections in May 2020.

Officers suggest therefore that a Sub Committee of this Committee is set up to consider any implications for the Borough and its constituency from this Review.

#### 4.2 **Leicestershire County Council Election**

These will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Melton Borough Council will run these on behalf of Leicestershire County Council, as is usually the case, with the planning already commencing.

#### 4.3 **Community Governance Review – Eaton Parish Council**

The Chief Executive has received a request from Eaton Parish Council to conduct a Community Governance Review of the number of councillors for each of the parish wards. This matter is in hand. Any changes will come into effect from the Parish Elections in 2019.

### 5 **Performance Standards**

#### 5.1 **Electoral Registration**

##### **Individual Electoral Registration –Canvass 2016 – Publication of Register on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

Melton Borough Council was not part of the sample for submitting information to the Electoral Commission for this canvass.

New performance standard have been produced for this year's canvass, and again we have not been chosen to submit information to the Electoral Commission.

These are risk based, with an element of 'random' selection also present. The Council has not in recent times been selected on the risk based basis.

#### 5.2 **Returning Officers Performance Standards – May 2016 and June 2016**

Melton Borough Council was not included within the sample of authorities chosen for submitting Performance standards for either of these two elections.

We were however obliged to submit Assurance Statement at each stage of both these elections to the PARO at North West Leicestershire for the PCC and the RCO at Kettering for the EU Referendum. We met the deadline for submitting all of these for both elections.

There is an increasing requirement from the Electoral Commission to carry out engagement, publicity campaigns and registration promotion. The Council follows Electoral Commission guidance and the core Election Team has been extended to ensure there is capacity to do this. Also, the Policy Team have been engaged to assist with this.

## 6.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The effective delivery of elections on behalf of the local community is a key reputational issue for the Council, particularly complicated taking into account the Council's size and the very complicated and different election procedures. The Council's existing team is integrated across the Council, with most services providing resources to ensure we manage these processes. The core Team is in Communications, who work particularly hard to keep the Council on course.

## 7.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no Financial implications arising directly from this report as budgets are allocated in advance by the Government and the Council. These have not been exceeded.

## 8.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

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

## 9.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

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

## 10.0 **EQUALITIES**

10.1 Access audits and reviews are carried out at regular intervals.

## 11.0 **RISKS**

11.1 There are no direct risks related to this report.

## 12.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

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

## 13.0 **CONSULTATION**

13.1 There is no requirement for consultation on this matter.

## 14.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

141 All Wards

Contact Officer      Angela Roberts / Sally Renwick  
Date:                      September 2016  
Appendices :            None  
Background  
Papers:  
Reference :              X: Committees/Governance/201617