

ELECTORAL SERVICES UPDATE

Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 4 October 2018

Report of Chief Officer Corporate Services

Status For Information

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: This is an update on the Electoral Services team to be noted.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Anna Firth

Contact Officer Nicola Fletcher, Ext. 7188

Recommendation to Legal and Democratic Services Advisory Committee:

The report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Portfolio Holder for Legal and Democratic Services has requested a brief update on the activities of the Electoral Services Team since June 2018.

Elections

- 2 Following the item considered by Council on 24 July 2018, there was a District by-election held on the 30 August for a seat in the Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth ward.
- 3 This by-election was successfully delivered by the Electoral Services team with the assistance of additional staff for polling and the count with the Returning Officer declaring the result shortly after 11pm.
- 4 The by-election covered three polling stations and was delivered successfully with any issues raised throughout the day dealt with promptly and efficiently by the team under the guidance of the Returning Officer.
- 5 The results of the by-election can be found on the District Council website but are also included at Appendix A for reference. Cllr Brian Carroll has now taken up his seat following the result.

Electoral Registration

- 6 The annual canvass process began on 1 August 2018 and will finish with the publication of the revised electoral register on 1 December 2018.

- 7 Following a review of the required resource within the team, three full time electoral outreach canvassers are now in post. As a result the canvass process is much improved with guaranteed resource available to cover the District.
- 8 At the time of writing response rates to the annual canvass are as follows:
Overall - 73.5% with 38,812 returned out of 50,689 and 12,506 outstanding
Online responses 19,813* (51%)
Paper responses 17,983* (46%)
Other 918* (2%)
*Figures may include duplicate returns
- 9 This is a currently favourable position as we are aiming for in excess of 50% of returns to be online and compares to the 2017 canvass where the final position was:
Online responses 18,873 (42.4%)
Paper responses 25,241 (57.5%)
Other 355 (0.8%)

Key Implications

Financial

Any activities undertaken have been met from existing budgets.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Under legislation it is a requirement for every district council and London Borough to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Returning Officer (RO). Whilst the ERO and RO is appointed by the council, the responsibilities of each role are personal responsibilities.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users below.

Conclusions

This report sets out for Members information regarding activities of the Electoral Services Team since June 2018.

Members are recommended to consider the information provided within the report.

Appendices

Appendix A - Declaration of results

Background Papers

None

Jim Carrington-West

Chief Officer Corporate Services