

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

24 APRIL 2017

Commenced: 4.00pm

Terminated: 4.30pm

Present: Councillors Cooney (In the Chair), Fairfoull, J. Fitzpatrick, K. Quinn, Taylor, Ward and Warrington

Apologies: Councillor P. Buckley

### 19. 2017 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance, Resources and Pensions) which informed Members of the statutory timetable for the 8 June 2017 Parliamentary (see **Appendix 1**) and consequent administrative matters for consideration. It was stated that the General Election had been called at short notice for Thursday, 8 June 2017. The statutory timetable for the election is attached at **appendix 1**. The key dates in the timetable are as follows:

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| • Dissolution of Parliament                   | Wednesday, 3 May 2017  |
| • Receipt of Writ                             | Thursday, 4 May 2017   |
| • Publication of Notice of Election           | Friday, 5 May 2017   |
| • Period for Delivery of Nomination Papers    | Monday, 8 May 2017 to Thursday, 11 May 2017 (between 10am and 4pm) |
| • Deadline for appointment of election agents | 4pm Thursday, 11 May 2017  |
| • Registration deadline                       | Monday, 22 May 2017  |
| • Postal Vote Application deadline            | Tuesday, 23 May 2017   |
| • Proxy Application deadline                  | Wednesday 31 May 2017  |
| • Notification of polling and counting agents | Thursday, 1 June 2017  |
| • Polling Day                                 | Thursday, 8 June 2017  |
| • Return of Election Expenses                 | Friday, 9 June 2017  |

Members were informed that the Tameside Returning Officer would be the (Acting) Returning Officer for three Parliamentary Constituencies:

- Ashton-under Lyne (including 2 wards from Oldham MBC);
- Denton and Reddish (including 2 wards from Stockport MBC);
- Stalybridge and Hyde

It was stated that given the statutory timetable and practicalities around printing the earliest that postal votes could be prepared and dispatched was Monday, 22 May and this date has been provisionally agreed with our printers.

With regard to postal vote verification and opening this will be conducted on a Parliamentary Constituency basis and **appendix 2** to the report showed a timetable based on the 2015 Parliamentary Election. As in previous years access to Postal Vote opening sessions would be by pass only.

Members were informed that in line with previous practice it was intended to have double polling stations where the polling station electorate (i.e. electorate less absent voters) was more than 1,750. If this approach is adopted there would be a total of 120 polling stations in Tameside; 13 in Failsworth and 17 in Reddish. It was intended to have one ballot box for each polling station.

It was explained that the process for submitting nomination papers for Parliamentary Elections was very tight with the period for delivering nomination papers being between 8 and 11 May. As with previous elections informal check of nominations would be offered to all those who wish to take

advantage of this service. It should be noted that although informal checks are offered responsibility for ensuring that nominations are correct and valid on submission is the responsibility of candidate and election agent.

The options for a venue in which to hold a count for three Parliamentary Constituencies were very limited. The 2015 Election Count had been undertaken at Unit 7, Plantation Estate, Whitelands Road. At present this unit was used for storage and would need to be cleared and brought up to a condition where it could again be used as the count venue. Any other venue, for example Dukinfield Town Hall, would mean significantly less space and would mean that there would not be space for as many counters.

As previously reported to the Working Group the Electoral Commission guidance on count venues was that where possible a single location should be used to minimise the risk for the Returning Officer for what is a large and complex operation. Unit 7, Plantation Estate is the only venue in the Borough where all three Constituencies can be counted in the same room and allow sufficient space for other operations which have to be undertaken and for candidates and agents to scrutinise the process. It is therefore proposed that the Count for the 8 June Parliamentary Election should be held at Unit 7, Plantation Estate.

**AGREED:**

- (i) That the timetable for 8 June General Election be noted;**
- (ii) That the approach to double polling stations be noted;**
- (iii) That Note the arrangements for postal vote dispatch and the timetable for postal vote opening be noted;**
- (iv) That it be noted that Unit 7, Plantation Industrial Estate, Whitelands Road, Ashton-under-Lyne will be used as the count venue for the 8 June election.**

**CHAIR**