

DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

18 February 2019

Commenced: 4.00pm

Terminated: 4.35pm

Present: Councillors Cooney (In the Chair), Billington, Fairfoull, J. Fitzpatrick, Kitchen, M Smith, Ward

Apologies: Councillor Fairfoull and Ryan

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 17 December 2018 be approved as a correct record.

14. 2019 ELECTIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance and Pensions), which updated Members on the statutory timetable for the 2 May 2019 Local Elections and on-going arrangements. Members were reminded that there would be combined Borough and Parish Election on 2 May 2019. The Notice of Election would be published on 26 March and nominations could be submitted between 27 March and 4pm on Wednesday 3 April.

Reference was made to changes meaning that in future all candidates in Local Elections would be able to request that their home address was not made public. Candidates would in future provide their qualifying address separately on a 'Home Address Form' and on that form request that their address is not made public. Were a request made to not make a candidates address public, the candidates address would not appear on the Statement of Persons Nominated or the ballot paper, instead the name of the Borough in which the candidate lives would appear.

Members noted the timetable for the production and distribution of postal votes, in particular that postal votes would be dispatched in Friday, 12 April 2019 and the timetable for opening of postal votes.

With regard to the verification and counting of votes it was stated that the Count for Local Elections was normally held at Dukinfield Town Hall and it was proposed that this continued to be the case. In line with usual practice it was proposed that the verification and counting of votes for the Borough Council elections should begin immediately after the close of poll at 10.00pm. With regard to the count for the Parish elections it was suggested that the verification should begin at 10.00pm on 2 May but that the actual counting of votes should begin at 11.00am on Friday 3 May.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the timetable for 2019 Elections be noted;**
- (ii) That the change to the nomination papers be noted;**
- (iii) That the arrangement for postal vote dispatch and the timetable for postal vote opening be endorsed;**
- (iv) That it be noted that all polling stations will be single polling stations;**
- (v) That it be noted the Count will begin immediately after the close of poll on 2 May at Dukinfield Town Hall but the counting of votes for the Parish elections will begin at 11.00am on Friday 3 May 2019.**

15. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance and Pensions) that reminded Members of the requirement to undertake a review of polling districts and polling stations before the end of 2019. It had previously been agreed that the review should be completed in time to implement any changes prior to the Local Election in 2019.

The report outlined the requirements for the review and the factors that needed to be considered in undertaking the review. At the meeting of the Working Group held on 17 December 2018 it was agreed that the starting point for the review should be no change other than:

- (a) Ashton Hurst – polling station HURST3 to be moved to the Community Hub on Gorsey Lane;
- (b) Droylsden East – undertake an assessment of the polling district split with Councillors with a view to bringing the average number of electors per polling station closer to the Borough average;
- (c) Droylsden West – that discussions be held with ward councillors with a view to replacing the polling station for DROYW5;
- (d) Longdendale – That discussions be held with ward Councillors with a view to determining if the polling district split in the ward is appropriate;
- (e) St Peters – That discussions be held with ward members to look to bring the average number of polling station electors nearer to the borough average.

RESOLVED:

That Council be recommended to agree the following changes to Polling Districts and Polling Stations to be implemented for the May 2019 Elections

- (i) **Ashton Hurst – polling station HURST3 to be moved to the Community Hub on Gorsey Lane;**
- (ii) **Droylsden East – that polling districts DROYE4 and DROYE5 be merged with a polling station at Fairfield Community Centre.**
- (iii) **Droylsden West – that the polling station for DROYW5 be moved from Lydgate Road to Peakdale Road;**
- (iv) **Longdendale – That LDALE6 Polling District be split with those to the north of Beaufort Road remaining in LDALE6 those to the south of Beaufort Road being transferred to LDALE2 as the polling station for this LDALE2 (Ken Ward Sports Centre) is more convenient for these electors.**

16. ABSENT VOTE REFRESH

Consideration was given to a report of the Director (Governance and Pensions) which updated Members on the refresh of absent vote personal identifiers that was currently being undertaken. It was explained that it was a requirement that all absent vote signatures which are more than five years old are refreshed. This year postal voters that last had a signature refresh between March 2013 and February 2014 were subject to the requirement to refresh. A total of 13,495 electors had been asked to re-submit their signatures for use in the verification of identifiers process. So far, 8942 (66%) had responded, a reminder would be sent out on 21 February, the deadline for receipt of refreshed signatures was 31 March 2019. Following the deadline all those that had not responded would be sent a letter informing them that they no longer had a postal vote, enclosing a postal vote form to complete should they wish to re-apply for a postal vote.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That the update be noted;**
- (ii) **That Members be provided with a list of non-responders for their wards with a view to reminding voters that they would lose their postal vote.**

14. ELECTORAL COMMISSION BULLETINS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Director (Governance and Pensions) that provided Members with recent copies of the Electoral Commission news bulletin, which set out current issues affecting the democratic framework for local government.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

CHAIR