

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**3 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **REFORMS TO THE ANNUAL CANVASS PROCESS**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise Members of the reforms being implemented for the Annual Canvass process for 2020 and beyond.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Each year annual registration forms are delivered to all properties in the district to ensure that the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) knows who is eligible to register to vote.
- 2.2 In 2020 new legislation came into force which requires the ERO to match the names and addresses of registered electors against data held by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP). It also enables the ERO to compare electoral data against that held by other departments of the District Council.
- 2.3 In addition to the above, the reforms to the canvass process enable some communications to be sent via email, which will ask the recipient to carefully follow instruction as to how to complete the registration process.
- 2.4 In short, this data matching element will streamline the process for registration as for those properties with no changes in occupancy, they will receive confirmation of those already registered, so will not be required to respond unless there are any changes to be made.
- 2.5 For those properties that do not match, registration forms will need to be completed and reminders issued in accordance with the usual practice during the canvass process. At this stage, it is unclear if a personal canvass of non-responding properties will be carried out due to the current restrictions due to Covid-19, however it is also possible to undertake a telephone canvass of non-responding properties.
- 2.6 Further details in relation to the changes can be found on the Council's website using the link below:

<https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/vote/latestnews/newregisterofelectors2020/>

#### **3.0 Equalities Implications**

- 3.1 It will be necessary to keep the response service under constant review to ensure that all those eligible to register to vote can do so by different means, e.g. telephone, online, or by post.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 It is anticipated that in the longer term cost savings could be realised by the changes to the way in which the annual canvass is undertaken e.g. less spend on printing, paper and postage.

#### **5.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

5.1 The changes to the annual canvass will align with the Community Plan's objective to increase participation with the Council and within local communities.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the changes to the Annual Canvass process as from 2020.**

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To ensure that Members are aware of the changes made to the Annual Canvass process.**

#### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Mark Jurejko – Electoral Services Manager on Ext. 5222.

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