

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**12 NOVEMBER 2020**

### **PROGRESS OF THE 2020 ANNUAL CANVASS**

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

1.1 To advise Members of the progress of the 2020 Annual Canvass following the reforms implemented for the process from this year and beyond. Members will recall the report to the previous meeting which detailed the changes brought about by canvass reform.

#### **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 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.

#### **3.0 Canvass Progress**

3.1 For properties that did match against the national DWP data, 39,793 letters were produced to ask occupiers to only respond if there were changes to the matched electors who are included on the current Register of Electors.

3.2 For those properties that did not match against the national DWP data, 17,985 canvass forms were sent on Friday 14 August 2020 (and a subsequent first reminder sent on Friday 11 September 2020). To date we have received a response from 11,361 (just over 63%) and these properties which must respond.

3.3 These responses (11,361) added to the number of matched properties (39,793), gives a total response of 51,154 from 57,778 properties (88.54%).

3.4 We have now downloaded the data to print second reminder canvass forms for those properties that have not responded by Friday 9 October 2020. These reminders were dispatched for delivery on Friday 16 October 2020.

3.5 As we have been processing completed canvass forms (and also any changes required from CCA forms), Invitation to Register (ITR) forms have also be sent to new people added to the property forms.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 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.

#### **5.0 Digital Implications**

5.1 There are no direct digital implications arising from this report. Digital methods are used to enable electors to complete applications to register to vote.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 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.

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

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

#### **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the progress of the 2020 Annual Canvass.**

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To ensure that Members are aware of the progress of the 2020 Annual Canvass.**

#### **Background Papers**

Nil

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

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