

MEETING

GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

DATE AND TIME

WEDNESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 2016

AT 7.00 PM

VENUE

HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BQ

TO: MEMBERS OF GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE (Quorum 3)

Chairman: Councillor Joan Scannell BEM

Vice Chairman: Councillor Wendy Prentice

Councillors

Richard Cornelius
Ammar Naqvi

Alison Moore
Barry Rawlings

Daniel Thomas

Substitute Members

Geof Cooke
Adam Langleben

Tom Davey
John Marshall

David Longstaff
Charlie O-Macauley

In line with the Constitution's Public Participation and Engagement Rules, requests to submit public questions or comments must be submitted by 10AM on the third working day before the date of the committee meeting. Therefore, the deadline for this meeting is Friday 4 November at 10AM. Requests must be submitted to Andrew Charlwood 020 8359 2014 andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk

You are requested to attend the above meeting for which an agenda is attached.

Andrew Charlwood – Head of Governance

Governance Service contact: Andrew Charlwood - 020 8359 2014
andrew.charlwood@barnet.gov.uk

Media Relations contact: Sue Cocker 020 8359 7039

ASSURANCE GROUP

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	Minutes	5 - 8
2.	Absence of Members	
3.	Disclosable Pecuniary interests and Non Pecuniary interests	
4.	Report of the Monitoring Officer (if any)	
5.	Public Question and Comments (if any)	
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Decisions of the General Functions Committee

10 October 2016

Members Present:-

AGENDA ITEM 1

Councillor Joan Scannell (Chairman)
Councillor Wendy Prentice (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ammar Naqvi	Councillor Tom Davey (In place of
Councillor Barry Rawlings	Councillor Richard Cornelius)
Councillor Daniel Thomas	Councillor Alison Moore

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Richard Cornelius

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Cornelius (who was substituted for by Councillor Tom Davey).

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS ITEM (IF ANY)

None.

7. APPROVAL OF PREMISES FOR WEDDINGS AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP REGISTRATIONS

The Committee received a report in the name of the Proper Officer for Registration. The report sought determination on applications received from the following venues to have their approvals as venues for Marriage and Civil Partnerships renewed for a further three years;

- Cavendish Banqueting Suite, The Hyde Edgware Road, NW9 5AE
- Adam and Eve Public House, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, NW7 1RL
- The Oak Room, 182 Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware, HA8 0AU
- The Haven Bistro and Bar, 1363/5 High Road, Whetstone, N20 9LN
- Greenvue Venue, Mill Hill Country Club, Burtonhole Lane, Mill Hill, NW7 1AS

RESOLVED that the **General Functions Committee** approves the applications received from **The Cavendish Banqueting Suite, The Adam and Eve Public House, The Oak Room, The Haven Bistro and Bar and The Greenvue Venue** to renew approvals for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships for a further period of three years from the date of expiry of the most recent approvals.

8. APPOINTMENT TO AN OUTSIDE BODY

The Committee received a report in the name of the Head of Governance. The report asked the committee to appoint a representative to vacancy on an outside body.

Nominations were circulated in respect of a vacancy on the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE). Councillor Zakia Zubairi was nominated on behalf of the Labour Group. Councillor John Hart was nominated on behalf of the Conservative Group. Upon being put to the vote it was declared that Councillor John Hart has been appointed.

RESOLVED that the following representative be appointed to a vacancy on an outside body;

Organisation	Representative	Term of Office
Standing Committee for Religious Education	Councillor John Hart	Four Years

9. NOMINATIONS TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The Committee received a report in the name of the Head of Governance. The report asked the committee to nominate representatives to local authority governor vacancies on the school governing bodies listed in Appendix A to the report.

Nominations were circulated in respect of 6 schools. The nominations were uncontested.

The General Functions Committee RESOLVED;

1. That the following representative be nominated to vacancies on school governing bodies

School Governing Body	Representative
St Mary's & St John's CE School	Dr Anshul Gupta
St Theresa's Catholic School	Mr Tony Shotton

2. Nominations to the following school governing bodies be deferred.

School Governing Body
Dollis Junior School
Livingstone School
Barnet Early Years Alliance School
Woodcroft School

10. DECISION OF A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY NOT TO APPOINT A LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE NOMINATED BY THE COUNCIL

The Committee considered a report in the name of the Head of Governance. The report asked the Committee to note the decision of a school governing body to not appoint a local authority nominee, together with the reasons for that decision.

RESOLVED that the General Functions Committee note:

- 1. That the governing body of a school considered the Council's nomination (made on 21 March 2016) and decided not to appoint the candidate.**
- 2. The reason for the governing body's decision (as set out in section 1.6 of the report).**
- 3. That the local authority governor position at that school remains vacant.**

11. GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed the 2016-17 work programme.

RESOLVED that the General Functions Committee agree the 2016-17 work programme.

12. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved a motion to exclude the press and public which was duly seconded and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public:

- in accordance with section 9 of part 19 of the Constitution Access to Information Rules); and**
- by virtue of Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 being information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and**
- because the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.**

13. DECISION OF A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY NOT TO APPOINT A LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE NOMINATED BY THE COUNCIL (EXEMPT)

The report identified the school governing body concerned. The Committee discussed in further detail the impactions of the governing body's decision which is set in paragraph 1.6 of the public report.

RESLOVED that the General Functions Committee note the report.

14. ANY ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES IS URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm

	<p>AGENDA ITEM 7</p> <p>General Functions Committee</p> <p>9 November 2016</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Title</p>	<p>Independent Review of the Electoral Registration and Elections Services in Barnet and the council’s Response</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Report of</p>	<p>Interim Chief Executive</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Enclosures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A: Dr Dave Smith’s Review of Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections Services • Appendix B: Report of the Elections and Electoral Registration Service Review Public Consultation
<p style="text-align: center;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>John Hooton – Interim Chief Executive</p>
<p>Summary</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report overlays the final report and recommendations of the external and independent ‘Review of Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections Services’ that has been conducted by Dr Dave Smith (former Returning Officer for Sunderland City Council). • Following the problem of incomplete electoral registers being supplied to polling stations for the GLA elections on 5 May 2016, an independent investigation was conducted, by Mr Mark Heath (Returning Officer for Southampton City Council) to look at the specific circumstances which led to the problems experienced by voters. The report from that investigation made a number of recommendations which were all accepted and implemented by the council. • The final recommendation from the Heath Investigation was that Barnet’s Returning Officer should <i>“initiate a review of the way in which elections are delivered and how the electoral services function operates with a view to producing suitable recommendations on resources, future management, support arrangements, operating practices, compliance issues and responsibility/accountability for the electoral services function.”</i> This review by Dr Smith, its recommendations and the further proposals put forward within this report constitute the council’s implementation of that recommendation from the Heath investigation. • In summary, Dr Smith’s review finds that the Electoral Registration and Elections Services in Barnet has strong and effective professional knowledge and experience and is compliant with both the law and Electoral Commission guidance, but that there are areas in which the services can be challenged to perform at a higher level and achieve beyond compliance. • Dr Smith’s report proposes 16 recommendations for Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections services. These recommendations are all accepted by the council and the Returning Officer and initial responses are contained within this report. 	

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee notes Dr Smith's report and its recommendations.**
- 2. That the Committee notes that the Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive has accepted all of the recommendations in Dr Smith's report and the initial status of the council's intention to implement these recommendations.**
- 3. That the Committee approves the Returning Officer and Chief Executive to bring annual reports to Committee detailing activities and performance of the Electoral Registration and Elections services of the council.**
- 4. That the Committee notes and approves that the Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive will oversee the preparation and delivery of an action plan to effectively implement all recommendations in a timely and effective manner by way of a monthly 'Elections Review Recommendations' management delivery board meeting which he will Chair.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement that the process of administering and running both electoral registration and elections is conducted entirely separately from politicians.
- 1.2 The final recommendation, made by Mr Mark Heath in his report from his external and independent investigation into the problem of incomplete registers being supplied to Barnet's polling stations for the GLA elections on 5 May 2016, was that the Returning Officer initiate a review of the way in which the elections services and electoral registration operates in Barnet *"with a view to producing suitable recommendations on resources, future management, support arrangements, operating practices, compliance issues and responsibility/accountability for the electoral services function"*.

Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Electoral Registration and Elections Services

- 1.3 At the meeting of the Committee on 29 June 2016, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the review were discussed and approved.
- 1.4 The Interim Chief Executive consulted with London Councils for advice on appropriate individuals that could conduct the London Borough of Barnet's independent review of Electoral Registration and Election Services before appointing Dr Smith.
- 1.5 The agreed ToR were subsequently communicated to Dr Dave Smith by the Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive when he was appointed to conduct the review on his behalf.
- 1.6 The ToR were drafted following consultation with the Electoral Commission and then approved by Committee 29th June 2016 and subsequently given to Dr Smith. They are as follows:

- Clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Returning Officer
- clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Council in relation to electoral registration, elections and referenda
- planning for elections and electoral registration activity in the context of the Electoral Commission's performance standards framework
- the structure; reporting lines and resourcing of the electoral services team including:
 - benchmarking the resourcing of the team with other London borough election/registration teams
 - investigating alternative delivery models for electoral services
- the effectiveness of the elections and electoral registration function, including:
- the arrangements for the production and distribution of poll cards; applications for and distribution of postal votes; applications for proxy votes and proactive work to ensure an accurate and complete register of electors
- practical arrangements for elections including the staffing and operation of the election call centre
- arrangements for the review of polling districts and the location of polling stations
- previous election reviews and lessons learnt, including the independent review undertaken following the May 2016 poll and evaluation following the EU Referendum

Information provided to Dr Smith and who he consulted

- 1.7 Dr Smith has clearly laid out the methodology for the conducting of his review within the introduction to his report and the relevant part of that paragraph is reproduced here:

“I have conducted this review by means of written evidence and a series of interviews. I have undertaken 21 interviews. These interviews have included staff and management of the Registration and Elections Service, Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers, politicians including Party Group Leaders, MP’s, the Member of the London Assembly for Barnet and Camden and other external stakeholders. I have also had the benefit of a public consultation undertaken by the Council. I have read and taken account of more than 50 separate written pieces of evidence including planning and project management documentation, policies, procedures, assessments and reviews, written complaints, comments and other submissions”

- 1.8 In consultation with Dr Smith, the LBB Communications team devised and conducted a Public Engagement process, which ran between 18 July and 14 August 2016 to ensure that the views of residents were incorporated into the Review. The consultation consisted of an online feedback form published on the Barnet website, with paper copies made available in libraries. Residents who could not access the internet or collect paper copies were invited to respond by telephone by contacting the council’s main call centre. All residents that had contacted the Returning Officer or Electoral Services office following the GLA elections in May (whether in relation to the problem with

registers on polling day or with another issue) were individually contacted to invite them to engage with the consultation. The report on results from this public consultation is attached as Appendix C.

Review recommendations and the council's initial response

- 1.9 Dr Smith's final report, which includes detailed outlines his recommendations, is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.10 The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive has accepted all of Dr Smith's recommendations and outlined below are the council's initial responses and status updates for each of them:

Recommendations from the Dr Smith's Independent Review of Barnet's Electoral Registration and Elections Services:

- 1) Establish a set of stretching but achievable objectives including on registration rates, election declaration times, speed and quality of communications:**

Response of the council: The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive will work closely with the Director of Assurance and the Head of Electoral Services to establish stretching but realistic objectives that meet the criteria set out by Dr Smith in his recommendation and ensure that progress against meeting these objectives are regularly monitored.

- 2) Research best practice in respect of the objectives chosen and consider how to apply to Barnet**
- 3) Revise business process plans, project plans and risk assessments in light of new objectives and methods**

Response of the council: The Head of Electoral Services will be tasked by the Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive with working closely with the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators to research and document examples of best practice across the services objectives (as set out in accordance with recommendation 1 above) and assess how these examples might be applied to Barnet. The Head of Electoral Service will present a planned approach to applying this best practice to Barnet's Electoral Registration and Elections Services objectives and service outputs. In addition the Returning Officer, Director of Assurance and Head of Electoral Services will consequently undertake a review of the business process plans, project plans and risk assessments based upon the newly developed objectives and best practice processes adopted.

- 4) Extend the Council's existing formal review processes to include an annual review of registration performance and embed an analysis of achievement against objectives. Continue to report the outcomes of the review to the General Functions Committee for both registration and elections**

Response of the council: The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive proposes that an annual report reviewing the performance of the electoral registration functions is brought to the General Functions Committee at its first meeting following publication of the annual 'Revised Register of Electors' on 1 December each year. It is proposed that the first report of this nature will be brought to the Committee's meeting currently scheduled for 16th January 2017.

- 5) Refresh the approach to the recruitment and retention of temporary staff and reconsider the content of the training to account for the technical and legal requirements of the role and the culture of achievement.**

Response of the council: In consultation with the Returning Officer, the Head of Electoral Services will review the approach taken to the recruitment and retention of temporary elections and registration canvassing staff and the training that is given to them. Further to this the Head of Electoral Services will develop an appropriate recruitment and retention action plan to be used as required during those periods when it is necessary to recruit temporary elections or registration staff – with a minimum requirement that it is effectively operational in time for the delivery of the Local Elections scheduled for May 2018 (which are currently the next borough-wide elections scheduled to be held in Barnet).

- 6) Further formalise, take account of and report on feedback received from internal and external stakeholders contributing to the election process and consider performance in light of this.**

Response of the council: In consultation with the Returning Officer and Assurance Director, the Head of Electoral Services will develop a standard review timetable, set of performance indicators and a formalised process for the conduct of reviews, which incorporate and take account of the feedback from internal and external stakeholders following any borough-wide election or referendum, with a minimum requirement that it is effectively operational in time for use following the Local Elections scheduled for May 2018.

- 7) Review the performance of staff employed to undertake roles on the canvass, at polling stations and at the count.**

Response of the council: The Head of Electoral Services will develop a set of key performance indicators to be used for more formally reviewing the performance of individual members of staff used for the conduct of elections and electoral registration (specific to the particular role any individual is appointed to deliver), with a minimum requirement that they are effectively operational in time for use at the Local Elections scheduled for May 2018.

- 8) Embed the count coordinator role within the registration and elections team**

9) Fully implement the restructuring of the registration and elections team and engage the team in new ways of working to support the intent of the restructuring. Consider as part of this the opportunity for team development

Response of the council response: The Director of Assurance will work with the Returning Officer, Barnet's Human Resources partner and the Head of Electoral Services to develop and propose a new structure for the Electoral Services team that will:

- incorporate the count coordinator responsibilities within the permanent staff population of the service (whilst ensuring that there is no significant loss of corporate knowledge or experience in relation to the responsibilities of this role)
- allow the wider team to both fully engage in new ways of working to support the demands of the electoral registration and elections in Barnet
- provide opportunities for future team development and secure more robust succession planning within the service

The Director of Assurance will work with the Head of Electoral Services and oversee the implementation of the new structure within the Electoral Services team in a timely and effective manner. It is estimated that the restructure of the Electoral Services Team can be fully completed and operational by the end of June 2017 following consultation with staff (assuming no changes to current election timetables are forthcoming).

10) Confirm the budget position including the replacement for the IER transitional grant, which is coming to an end

Response of the council: The Returning Officer will work with the Director of Assurance and the Director of Resources to ensure that the budget position of the Electoral Services team continues to be sufficient and appropriate to the demands upon the service. In particular, the ongoing budgetary demands placed upon the service by the implementation of IER since 2012 will be closely monitored and budgeted for as required.

11) Embed a quality assurance process to check the details of key documentation/outputs – including poll cards, postal votes, registers, polling station equipment, HEFs, ITRs etc.

12) Further consider detailed working practices within the team to address efficiency and effectiveness particularly as it relates to intense period activity

13) Plan and prepare early for additional staffing needs at times of intense activity and train and prepare those staff

Response of the council: The Director of Assurance and Head of Electoral Services (in consultation with the Returning Officer) will develop revised processes for the checking of key documents being generated by Electoral Services and also ensure that there is appropriate resource within the wider Commissioning Group and Assurance Directorate to

support the external verification and proofing of critical and essential documentary outputs. Further to this, the Director of Assurance will work with the senior managers across the Commissioning Group to develop a wider staff resource that is both trained and available to support the Electoral Services Team across the various critical and time-consuming processes and activities necessary during periods of intense activity for elections and registration throughout the electoral cycle.

14) Consider further planning and action to consult, engage and proactively inform relevant staff and stakeholders of actions being taken and concerning critical points in the process of registration and elections

Response of the council: The Head of Electoral Services will develop and run an informal and advisory 'Democracy Working Group' comprised of invited and relevant staff and stakeholders (e.g. Members, Election Agents, Staff from LBB Communications, Representatives of Local Community Groups etc.). Although this group cannot and will not have any decision making powers, the purpose of the group will be to communicate current planning and activities within Electoral Services and to take on board feedback regarding those activities and plans. It is currently estimated that a first meeting of this advisory group (to agree Terms of Reference, frequency and nature of meetings etc.) can be arranged for early in 2017.

15) Review and further systematise arrangements within the team for handling reactive communications from staff, the public and stakeholders and for the management of communications from the contact centre

16) Continue to develop the arrangements between the contact centre and the elections team to identify improvements in the preparation for elections, in contingency planning and in the communication between the contact centre and the elections team for live issues

Response of the council: The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive, Director of Strategy and Customer Services and the Director of Assurance to work with appropriate directors from CSG to enhance current arrangements and further develop provisions for the operational processes and responsibilities of a discrete elections call-centre operation when required. These arrangements to include additional training for call centre agents with the objective of driving up quality of advice and speed of resolution to residents and electors enquires. Following this, CSG and Electoral Services (in consultation with the Communications Team) to further develop the systemised arrangements between them for the handling of contacts from the public and other stakeholders during the period that an elections call centre is operational.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Dr Smith's review was conducted independently and the recommendations that he has put forward have similarly been reached independently. The interim Chief Executive and Returning Officer accepts all of Dr Smith's recommendations.
- 2.2 As Dr Smith has stated in his report: "the Returning Officer, his staff and the Councillors interviewed are focussed on learning the lessons and ensuring the service continues to improve. My recommendations in this review point to the opportunity to further embed the desire to improve through focussed ambition, and continuing improvement in the translation of plans into action". The full adoption of these recommendations and the initial plans that are being put into place to achieve them are considered essential in rebuilding confidence in the effectiveness of the Electoral Services delivered by the council.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 As this review was initiated following the acceptance by Committee (and the Returning Officer) of all of the proposals put forward by Mr Mark Heath in his report of his Independent Investigation into the problem with registers on polling day of 5 May 2016, no other options were put forward for consideration.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive accepts all of Dr Smith's recommendations and as per the responses laid out above will oversee a body of work to see that the recommendations are fully adopted and worked into the normal practice and performance of the Electoral Registration and Elections functions of the council
- 4.2 The Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive to bring annual reports to Committee detailing activities and performance of the Electoral Registration and Elections services of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

It is a Corporate Priority to ensure fairness in decision making. In line with this, it is essential that electoral processes are robust and fair to all in Barnet. By adopting and implementing the recommendations put forward by Dr Smith it is considered that the principle of fairness in decision making (specifically with regards to electoral processes) will be further enhanced for the residents and electors of Barnet.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2...1 As illustrated by Recommendation 10 above, taken from Dr Smith's report, there is an identified financial pressure upon Electoral Services due to the additional demands brought about by the introduction of

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) legislation in January 2013.

- 5.2...2 The Head of Electoral Services has calculated this pressure (once it is confirmed that no further grant funding for IER will be forthcoming from Cabinet Office) to be in the region of £180,000 per year – most specifically related to the costs of the statutory annual IER Household Enquiry Form canvass that must be conducted between 1 July and 1 December each year. A reserve is being considered to be set up to fund these costs, should the IER grant funding cease.
- 5.2...3 As per Recommendations 8 and 9 above, taken from Dr Smith’s report, there is a reasonable likelihood that some additional staffing budget will be required to fund a new position or positions within a restructured Electoral Services Team, to fully meet the proposals to be brought forward by the Assurance Director. At present it is considered reasonable to expect that this additional funding will be in the region of approx. £50,000 per annum for an additional staff post and to enable the responsibilities of a Count Coordinator to be fully embedded within the team. Once this review has taken place funding will be identified.
- 5.2...4 In accordance with electoral legislation specific to each electoral franchise, the majority of costs for most borough-wide elections are met by other relevant governmental agencies (e.g. Parliamentary election costs are met by parliament, London Mayoral/GLA election costs are met by the GLA etc.). The costs of Council (local) elections however are met in full by the council and any increases in the cost of conducting any election activities will have to be met by the council (whether for full Council elections, such as those scheduled for May 2018, or for single vacancy ‘by elections’).

5.3 Social Value
Not applicable.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4...1 Each London Borough is required by Section 35(3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 Act to appoint an officer of the council (the proper officer of the council) to be the Returning Officer (RO) for elections of borough councillors. Section 8(2)(a) of the Act also requires the Council to appoint an officer to be the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). The ERO is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the electoral register for any parliamentary constituency or part of a constituency within its area.
- 5.4...2 According to Section 28(1)(a) of the Act, only the ERO may act as the (Acting) Returning Officer at Parliamentary elections for constituencies in London, the Returning Officer for these elections being the Council’s Mayor. It is common practice throughout therefore, that a single officer is appointed as both the RO and ERO.
- 5.4...3 Responsibility for appointing a Deputy Returning Officer rests solely with the Returning Officer (RPA 1983 35(4)). However s52(2) of the Act

provides that any deputy ERO must also be approved by the Council.

- 5.4...4 The Council Constitution, Responsibility for Functions (Annex A) sets out the terms of reference of the General Functions Committee, which include responsibility for “Elections in general”.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5...1 This report notes the recommendations made by an independent review, which was itself a key recommendation of an independent investigation. The point of this independent review has been to assess the current performance and suitability of Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections Services and to identify where improvements can be made to reduce the risk of poor performance, to identify what went wrong and learn from it, and so the actions detailed in the recommendations are designed to identify and minimise any risks.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6...1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups
- 5.6...2 It is considered that the adoption and implementation of the recommendations from Dr Smith’s review will not negatively affect any of the groups protected under the Equality Act.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.7...1 The Interim Chief Executive consulted with London Councils before appointing Dr Dave Smith as detailed in 1.4 above.
- 5.7...2 A public consultation was undertaken to gather responses as detailed at 1.6 above.

5.8 Insight

Not applicable

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Report and appendixes of the Independent Investigation conducted by Mr Mark Heath that was presented to the special meeting of the General Functions Committee held on 9 June 2016
- 6.2 Approval of the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review of Barnet’s Electoral Registration and Elections Services made by General Functions Committee at the meeting held on 29 June 2016.

London Borough of Barnet – Review of the Registration and Elections Services

Introduction

The London Borough of Barnet and its Returning Officer faced criticism for an error made at the GLA elections in May 2016 whereby the polling stations were issued with an inaccurate register. This error caused individual electors affected in the first part of the election day to be at best inconvenienced by having to manage their availability to vote and at worst unable to vote. A detailed independent review was undertaken into the circumstances surrounding the error and the action taken to rectify the error during polling day. This review undertaken by Mark Heath in May 2016 addressed these concerns and made a series of recommendations, including the need for a wider review of Barnet's electoral and registration service. The Council adopted the recommendations in full and commissioned the wider review from me. The terms of reference of my review were identified to me as

To review Barnet Council's electoral and registration functions, to identify actions to be taken to improve these and to agree an action plan to ensure actions are implemented. Specifically to consider:

- Clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Returning Officer
- Clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Council in relation to electoral registration, elections and referenda
- Planning for elections and electoral registration activity in the context of the Electoral Commission's performance standards framework
- The structure; reporting lines and resourcing of the electoral services team including:
 - benchmarking the resourcing of the team with other London borough election/registration teams
 - investigating alternative delivery models for electoral services

- The effectiveness of the elections and electoral registration function, including:
 - The arrangements for the production and distribution of poll cards; applications for and distribution of postal votes; applications for proxy votes and proactive work to ensure an accurate and complete register of electors
 - Practical arrangements for elections including the staffing and operation of the election call centre
 - Arrangements for the review of polling districts and the location of polling stations
 - Previous election reviews and lessons learnt, including the independent review undertaken following the May 2016 poll and evaluation following the EU Referendum

Timeline

Report to General Functions Committee 9th November, 2016. Implementation of recommendations from the review in time for the 2018 local elections.

Methodology

I have conducted this review by means of written evidence and a series of interviews. I have undertaken 21 interviews. These interviews have included staff and management of the Registration and Elections Service, Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officers, politicians including Party Group Leaders, MP's, the Member of the London Assembly for Barnet and Camden and other external stakeholders. I have also had the benefit of a public consultation undertaken by the Council. I have read and taken account of more than 50 separate written pieces of evidence including planning and project management documentation, policies, procedures, assessments and reviews, written complaints, comments and other submissions. My review was undertaken between the end of July and the end of September, 2016. My assessment, conclusions and recommendations are intended to assist the Council and the Returning Officer to continue to ensure that the registration and elections service are meeting the needs of the electorate and effectively supporting the democratic process within the law and consistent with the standards and guidance issued by the Electoral Commission.

Assessment

- 1) Clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer

A local government Returning Officer is personally responsible and accountable for the administration of the local government election. The

principal duties include the nominations process, the provision and equipping of polling stations, the appointment of presiding officers and clerks, the management of the postal voting process and the verification and counting of votes. The specific duties to be undertaken vary by degrees by the nature of the election where other tiers of responsibility may apply; for example Regional Returning Officers, Chief Counting Officers and the Greater London Returning Officer. Nevertheless the core personal statutory duty applies.

It is the responsibility of all Returning Officers to ensure that in the administration of the election process the voters and those who stand for election have a positive experience in so far as the process is concerned. It is this point that underpins the Electoral Commissions standards by which they assess and judge the performance of Returning Officers. The Returning Officer must ensure that there is comprehensive, robust documented planning and decision-making. This underpins an effective system, minimizes the possibility of mistakes, supports actions to correct mistakes made and provides evidence should the Returning Officer be challenged.

Where mistakes are made in what is a complex and at times intense process for all involved, the Returning Officer is empowered in law to act to remedy mistakes made in the process and take reasonable and necessary steps that are within the law and guidance. Indeed, a failure to act to remedy mistakes leaves the returning officer vulnerable to a charge of having breached his/her official duty. Where appropriate action is taken the Returning Officer will not have committed an offence.

It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and he must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as they think most convenient.

The Returning Officer, rather than the Local Authority, decides the polling stations within the polling places determined by the Council. There is a requirement to consult with interested parties.

The Electoral Registration Officer has a statutory duty to maintain an electoral register, which is as accurate and complete as possible, and to publish this register. In fulfilling this duty the Electoral Registration Officer is required to

- send more than once to any address the form to be used for the canvass
- make on one or more occasions house to house enquiries
- make contact by such other means as the registration officer thinks appropriate with persons who do not have an entry in a register
- inspect any records held by any person which he is permitted to inspect
- provide training to persons under his direction or control in connection with the carrying out of the duty

The Electoral Registration Officer is also under a duty to proactively take any other steps that may promote greater accuracy and completeness of the

register and to encourage the participation of electors in their area in the electoral process.

2) Clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Council in relation to electoral registration, elections and referenda

The Council has a duty to appoint and make available to the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer the resources necessary to fulfil his statutory responsibilities. In carrying out this duty the Council is required to satisfy itself that the allocated resources are being used efficiently and effectively, consistent with its general duties and powers.

The Council also has a duty to determine polling districts and polling places and is under a duty to consult before making its decision.

The Electoral Registration Officer is responsible for amending the register to reflect any changes to the polling districts.

In the general functioning of the registration and elections process I am satisfied that the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer complies with his primary duties and responsibilities.

The Electoral Registration Officer takes the steps required to comply within his statutory duty including additional actions to promote registration and participation in the electoral process.

The Returning Officer similarly complies in systemic terms with the requirements placed upon him in the conduct of elections.

In both instances, there is good evidence of strong and robust planning and documentation, the proper review of outcomes and of learning from mistakes made.

In addressing the specific mistake made in the deployment of an incomplete register during the GLA elections, the Returning Officer breached the Electoral Standard of ensuring the quality of the service to the electorate and maintaining the confidence of candidates. The Returning Officer did, however, take reasonable steps to rectify the mistake and there was no evidence of systemic weakness and this error or others of a similar magnitude did not occur at the subsequent referendum.

The Council complies with its primary duties in securing the resources for the conduct of elections and registration, in the oversight of performance and in the review of polling districts and places. The General Functions Committee engages in the post election reviews and in the review of polling districts and places. The General Functions Committee took the decision to arrange a review of the elections and registrations service both to examine the specific circumstances of the GLA Election errors and a wider systemic review.

There are, of course, areas of practice which could continue to be improved and adapted to changing circumstances in both the areas of registration and elections. The accuracy and completeness of the register is a continuing challenge given a growing and transient population and in the context of the complexities associated with Individual Electoral Registration. The need to ensure initiatives taken to maximise registration are effective and achieve the desired result is key in circumstances where resources are limited. In similar terms the ability to deliver an election process which is accurate, provides as timely an outcome as possible and adapts to changing circumstances including combined polls, different election methods, changes to accommodation and logistics, require adaptability and a culture of continuous improvement. Building on the core strength and experience within the elections and registration service, the recommendations in this report draw attention to how further improvements can be made.

3) Planning for elections and electoral registration activity in the context of the Electoral Commission's performance standards framework

As indicated above the Returning Officer has breached the Electoral Commission standards for the GLA elections. However, at a more systemic level I have not found any practice that would fail to meet the Commission's core standards. The Returning Officer complies with the need to plan the requirements for both registration and election and this is well evidenced in the suite of planning documents completed by the Returning Officer. The core processes, risk assessments, and reviews are fully documented and the Returning Officer has comprehensive project plans in place. This evidence supports the conclusion that the Returning Officer fulfils his duties in the conduct of elections and in the registration process.

Nevertheless, the elections and registration service would benefit from the development of objectives and continuous improvement planning that offers the service the opportunity to stretch and challenge its performance. New objectives that enable the service to develop and refine its activities would assist both the service to better meet the needs of the registration and elections process and would further improve the experience of candidates, agents and the electorate in the exercise of these functions. This approach targeted at registration rates, the timeliness of count declarations, improved internal and external communications would do much to further improve the experience and confidence in practice. Focussed objectives will provide better opportunities to define what good looks like, to refresh the planning process and its supporting documentation and enable the Council to further fulfil its function in holding the Returning Officer to account for overall performance.

Recommendations

- 1) Establish a set of stretching but achievable objectives including on registration rates, election declaration times, speed and quality of communications**

- 2) **Research best practice in respect of the objectives chosen and consider how to apply to Barnet. Seek guidance from the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Electoral Commission on Local Authorities with proven track records**
 - 3) **Revise business process plans, project plans and risk assessments in light of new objectives and methods**
 - 4) **Extend the Council's existing formal review processes to include an annual review of registration performance and embed an analysis of achievement against objectives. Continue to report the outcomes of the review to the General Functions Committee for both registration and elections**
- 4) The structure; reporting lines and resourcing of the electoral services team including: benchmarking the resourcing of the team with other London borough election/registration teams and investigating alternative delivery models for electoral services

Benchmarked against other London Boroughs the elections and registration service is broadly on a par in its overall team resourcing. (Appendix 1) However, there are some arrangements which require further consideration in the context of the planning and delivery of registration and elections services. Barnet, like most Councils, relies upon a range of people for canvassing, polling stations and counts. In the main this works well, though there is a significant turnover and this affects levels of experience and commitment. I note that currently Barnet's practice for counts is only to use Council staff, including LATC and Capita staff. This appears to me to be overly restrictive in the context of attracting sufficient of the right people for counts. Particular attention needs to be paid to continuing to refresh training that encompasses both the technical and legal requirements of the role and also begins to instil a culture that promotes pride, commitment and achievement in fulfilling the role. Feedback from polling staff, presiding officers and supervisors and count supervisors, assistant DROs and others can be used to inform improvement and be part of considering the suitability and performance of those involved in the count. The fee structure adopted needs to account for the structure and retention policy the Returning Officer wishes to retain.

Barnet also uses a key individual outside the structure as a count coordinator. He designs the count, prepares and delivers training to count staff and coordinates activity at the count. The individual involved has a great deal of knowledge and experience and he ensures that he has up to date guidance in the planning of each election. However, such a key role not embedded in the structure and overall process puts at risk business continuity, knowledge transfer, accountability and responsibility. This is qualitatively different from ancillary roles such as logistics. The Returning Officer should embed this role within the registration and elections service.

Consistent with the recommendations in section 3 above, the Returning Officer /ERO and Deputy Returning Officer/DERO should consider how to

create managerial accountability in adopting a continuous improvement model. Strong planning needs to be consistently translated into strong delivery to ensure intent and action are matched and where they are not that learning can take place. There is a high degree of professionalism and experience within the service and further development of a management culture which supports achievement will make the most of these assets.

The Council had intended to restructure the team to integrate roles and responsibilities within the team whilst allowing for the focus to shift in the cycle between aspects of registration and the election. This remains the most effective model to adopt given rolling registration, canvass periods and the cycle of elections. However, I do not think the intent of the restructuring has been fully achieved and this needs to be resolved. This needs to be underpinned by decisions over the budgets to support the activity of the team. There needs to be a clear and consistent budgeting that allows the elections and registration team to plan the activities over the year and achieve its goals.

Recommendations

5) Refresh the approach to the recruitment and retention of temporary staff and reconsider the content of the training to account for the technical and legal requirements of the role and the culture of achievement.

6) Further formalise, take account of and report on feedback received from internal and external stakeholders contributing to the election process and consider performance in light of this.

7) Review the performance of staff employed to undertake roles on the canvass, at polling stations and at the count.

8) Embed the count coordinator role within the registration and elections team

9) Fully implement the restructuring of the registration and elections team and engage the team in new ways of working to support the intent of the restructuring. Consider as part of this the opportunity for team development

10) Confirm the budget position for the replacement of the IER transitional grant, which is coming to an end

5) The effectiveness of the elections and electoral registration function, including: the arrangements for the production and distribution of poll cards; applications for and distribution of postal votes; applications for proxy votes and proactive work to ensure an accurate and complete register of electors. Practical arrangements for elections including the staffing and operation of the election call centre. Arrangements for the

review of polling districts and the location of polling stations. Previous election reviews and lessons learnt, including the independent review undertaken following the May 2015 poll and evaluation following the EU Referendum

The Registration and Elections Service detected a problem in the printing of 764 polling cards in the run up to the election in May 2016. The polling cards included the wrong polling station address, though the map on the polling card was correct. Relative to the size of the registered electorate it was small in number and the error was detected at the time and corrected. Instances of this type occur, as do instances of inaccuracies on postal vote papers. As Mark Heath made clear in his report the only way to minimise the risk of such errors is to ensure that there are robust quality checks taking place and that these are undertaken by someone independent of those who have been directly involved in the design and content generation. A systemic approach to quality checking is essential in the conduct of registration and election processes.

The core administrative processes for all aspects of the register and the issuing of paper work to the electorate are essentially robust and complete. There are clear signs that at intense activity times in the period running up to the election that the elections team are under severe strain and the risk of errors necessarily increases. Whilst this is mitigated by the actions taken to draft in additional Council staff to assist, their contribution is limited dependent on their prior experience. Some further work could be done as part of the restructuring work referenced above to examine working practices within the team, the ability of the team members to contribute to the full range of duties and to earlier and better preparation of additional staff who may be required temporarily to assist at high activity points.

There are a number of reasons why a postal voter may have cause for complaint concerning the non-receipt of a postal vote including not having successfully registered for a postal vote, error in the issuing of the postal vote and an error in the delivery. The most important issue for confidence in the system is early and effective communication. The ability to address the complaint with accurate and timely information is key alongside the clarity of the remedy. This applies for all aspects of the registration and electoral cycle and applies to handling complaints and concerns of individuals through to more proactive communication and engagement of key stakeholders in the process. Whilst, the professionalism and knowledge of the service is widely recognised, there are always improvements that can be made to communication. As part of the organisation within the team there needs to be further consideration on how the team's resources are used to further systematise points of contact, availability of points of contact, access to information and proactive communication. This is a critical issue at points of intense activity and the ability to provide reassurance through good communication to staff, the public, candidates and agents is a key element of effective practice.

The role of the contact centre is a critical element in this process. Effective communication and resolution of matters within the purview of the contact centre is dependent on the preparation, planning, implementation, training and support provided to the contact centre agents. It is also dependent on a fast, efficient and effective means to communicate and resolve matters that require the direct attention of the elections team. This remains an area for further development. There have been improvements since the system was introduced in 2015. The early planning, the mutual training and engagement between the contact centre and the elections team is to be commended. However, there remains more to do in the detailed implementation and the system of communication between the contact centre and the elections team in the live environment. In a fast changing environment of an election period there needs to be firmer contingency plans to ensure sufficient trained and equipped staff at the contact centre to manage issues that arise unexpectedly. The means of communicating phone and email contacts from the contact centre to the elections team need to be more systematised and the elections team need to be organised to deal with those that require their particular input. Further consideration should be given as to whether the contact centre's role can be safely expanded to resolve more contacts at the first point of contact and release more elections team time for other matters.

The arrangements for the review of polling districts and polling places are consistent with Electoral Commission guidance. The Council and the Returning Officer must continue to ensure that the distinction between the Council's role to decide polling districts and polling places and the Returning Officer's role in determining polling stations is understood. There will always be tensions and issues about determining these arrangements and compromise is often required to balance the views on community needs and the availability of suitable venues.

The reviews undertaken by the elections service following elections is good practice and to be commended. There is evidence of learning from the outcome of the reviews, including immediate action to implement the recommendations of Mark Heath's review of the register error made at the GLA election. It is noteworthy that the Returning Officer, his staff and the Councillors interviewed are focussed on learning the lessons and ensuring the service continues to improve. My recommendations in this review point to the opportunity to further embed the desire to improve through focussed ambition, and continuing improvement in the translation of plans into action.

Recommendations

11) Embed a quality assurance process to check the details of key documentation/outputs – including poll cards, postal votes, registers, polling station equipment, HEFs, ITRs etc.

12) Further consider detailed working practices within the team to address efficiency and effectiveness particularly as it relates to intense period activity

13) Plan and prepare early for additional staffing needs at times of intense activity and train and prepare those staff

14) Consider further planning and action to consult, engage and proactively inform relevant staff and stakeholders of actions being taken and concerning critical points in the process of registration and elections

15) Review and further systematise arrangements within the team for handling reactive communications from staff, the public and stakeholders and for the management of communications from the contact centre

16) Continue to develop the arrangements between the contact centre and the elections team to identify improvements in the preparation for elections, in contingency planning and in the communication between the contact centre and the elections team for live issues

Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

Notwithstanding the particular problems experienced at the GLA elections, Barnet's elections and registration practice is compliant with the law and the Electoral Commission's guidance. The service would benefit from greater challenge that expects the service to perform at a higher level through a process of continuing improvement underpinned by objectives that set a direction of travel for achievements above compliance.

The service has strong and effective professional knowledge and experience. Much of this is evidenced in the planning for registration and elections. The strength of the planning is not always matched by the same robustness in the execution. Practices in the arrangements for staff to support the election, the count process, initiatives to maintain the register and some aspects of communication could be refreshed to help set a more dynamic approach. This would assist in further improving the confidence of staff and stakeholders in the registration and election process.

Recommendations

- 1) Establish a set of stretching but achievable objectives including on registration rates, election declaration times, speed and quality of communications**
- 2) Research best practice in respect of the objectives chosen and consider how to apply to Barnet**
- 3) Revise business process plans, project plans and risk assessments in light of new objectives and methods**

- 4) **Extend the Council's existing formal review processes to include an annual review of registration performance and embed an analysis of achievement against objectives. Continue to report the outcomes of the review to the General Functions Committee for both registration and elections**
- 5) **Refresh the approach to the recruitment and retention of temporary staff and reconsider the content of the training to account for the technical and legal requirements of the role and the culture of achievement.**
- 6) **Further formalise, take account of and report on feedback received from internal and external stakeholders contributing to the election process and consider performance in light of this.**
- 7) **Review the performance of staff employed to undertake roles on the canvass, at polling stations and at the count.**
- 8) **Embed the count coordinator role within the registration and elections team**
- 9) **Fully implement the restructuring of the registration and elections team and engage the team in new ways of working to support the intent of the restructuring. Consider as part of this the opportunity for team development**
- 10) **Confirm the budget position including the replacement for the IER transitional grant, which is coming to an end**
- 11) **Embed a quality assurance process to check the details of key documentation/outputs – including poll cards, postal votes, registers, polling station equipment, HEFs, ITRs etc.**
- 12) **Further consider detailed working practices within the team to address efficiency and effectiveness particularly as it relates to intense period activity**
- 13) **Plan and prepare early for additional staffing needs at times of intense activity and train and prepare those staff**
- 14) **Consider further planning and action to consult, engage and proactively inform relevant staff and stakeholders of actions being taken and concerning critical points in the process of registration and elections**
- 15) **Review and further systematise arrangements within the team for handling reactive communications from staff, the public and stakeholders and for the management of communications from the contact centre**
- 16) **Continue to develop the arrangements between the contact centre and the elections team to identify improvements in the preparation for elections, in contingency planning and in the communication between the contact centre and the elections team for live issues**

Dr D. Smith

Managing Director

Promodo Ltd

14th October, 2016

Appendix 1

Borough	Electorate Size (by band)	Current Full Time Staff (or equivalent) for Electoral Services only (not inc. Mgr)
A	A - Up to 150,000	Equivalent of 4 fte delivering both registration and electoral services
<i>B</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
Barnet	E - Over 225,000	6.5
BB	D - 200,000 to 225,000	4.4
C	A - Up to 150,000	5.5
CC	D - 200,000 to 225,000	6
<i>D</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>DD</i>	E - Over 225,000	No reply to questionnaire
E	A - Up to 150,000	4 plus 2 apprentices
<i>EE</i>	E - Over 225,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>F</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
FF	E - Over 225,000	8 (4 - Registration) (3 - Elections) (1 - canvasser) NOTE: 1 of above Elections post shared with Members Services
<i>G</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
H	A - Up to 150,000	8
<i>I</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>J</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire

Borough	Electorate Size (by band)	Current Full Time Staff (or equivalent) for Electoral Services only (not inc. Mgr)
<i>K</i>	A - Up to 150,000	No reply to questionnaire
M	B - 150,000 to 175,000	8
<i>N</i>	B - 150,000 to 175,000	No reply to questionnaire
O	B - 150,000 to 175,000	4
<i>P</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>Q</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>R</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>S</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
T	C - 175,000 to 200,000	2 FT 1PT 1 FT fixed term contract
U	C - 175,000 to 200,000	6 (includes an apprentice funded via top up IER funding)
V	C - 175,000 to 200,000	5
<i>W</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
<i>X</i>	C - 175,000 to 200,000	No reply to questionnaire
Y	D - 200,000 to 225,000	11
Z	D - 200,000 to 225,000	5

Election and Electoral Registration Consultation Report

Final Report

18 July 2016 to 14 August 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings from the Election and Electoral Registration Service Review.

Background

Following completion of the independent investigation into problems with the electoral registers during the London Mayoral and GLA Elections on the morning of Thursday 5th May 2016, the council decided to undertake an independent review of its Election Service to ensure any wider concerns are investigated and addressed where needed.

As part of this review the council is keen to gather feedback from residents on their experiences of elections in Barnet and the Elections Registration Service. The aim of gathering this feedback was not to focus on the 5th May but to try and capture residents' views in general terms of elections in Barnet and the service provided.

1. Summary of method

The review consisted of an online feedback form published on <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk>. Paper copies of the feedback form were also available from libraries and were available to download from the council's website. Residents who did not have access to the internet or could not pick up a paper copy were invited to give their feedback by telephoning the council's call centre.

The review was widely promoted via the council's website; local press; Twitter; Facebook; and posters in libraries.

2. Response to the review

A total of 35 online and 3 paper feedback forms were completed. No telephone surveys were completed.

A series of demographic questions were asked including age, gender, ethnicity, disability and faith. Due to the small sample size the results have not been analysed by these demographics.

3. Calculating and reporting on results

The results are based on "valid responses" only, i.e. all those providing an answer to a question (this may or may not be the same as the total response) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question depending on the extent of non-response (i.e. respondents skipping questions).

4. Key headlines

The key headlines are presented below.

Respondents who disagreed with any of these questions were also asked to give reasons for their response. Sample sizes for these are very small, and there was very little consensus. Full details can be found under section 5.

4.1 Information about Electoral Registration

- half of those responding to the review (50%, 19 out of 38) agree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand.
- one-fifth of respondents (21%, 8 out of 38) disagree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand.
- 16% of respondents (6 out of 38) indicated they are neutral (neither agree nor disagree).
- 13% of respondents (5 out of 38) indicated they had not seen any of this publicity information.

4.2 Registering to vote

- three-quarters of respondents (74%, 25 out of 34) agree that they receive enough information about how to register to vote. 12% (4 out of 34) disagree, and the remainder are neutral 15% (5 out of 34).
- three-fifths of respondents (61%, 20 out of 33) agree that the registering to vote process is straightforward. 3% of respondents (6 out of 33) disagree, and the remainder are either neutral (18%, 6 out of 33) or indicated they did not know (3%, 1 out of 33).
- just over half of respondents (55%, 18 out of 33) agree that they are satisfied overall with the registering to vote process in Barnet. 30% (10 out of 33) disagree, and the remainder are neutral 15% (5 out of 33).

4.3 Polling Stations

Two respondents (6%, 2 out of 34) indicated they have never voted at a polling station.

Of those respondents who have voted at a polling station:

- three-quarters of respondents (75%, 24 out of 32) agree that the information provided about their polling station is clear. 13% (4 out of 32) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (13%, 4 out of 32).
- three-fifths of respondents (59%, 19 out of 32) agree that voting at a polling station is straightforward. 19% (6 out of 32) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (22%, 7 out of 32).

- three-fifths of respondents (59%, 19 out of 32) agree they are satisfied with the location of their polling station overall. 31% (10 out of 32) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (9%, 3 out of 32).

4.4 Applying for a proxy vote

Over a half of respondents (55%, 18 out of 33) indicated they have never applied for a proxy vote.

Of those respondents who have applied for proxy vote:

- two-thirds of respondents (66%, 10 out of 15) agree that they receive enough information about how to apply for a proxy vote. 7% (1 out of 15) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 15).
- just over half of respondents (54%, 7 out of 13) agree that applying for a proxy vote is straightforward. 15% (2 out of 13) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 15).
- nearly three-fifths of respondents (58%, 7 out of 12) agree they are satisfied with the process for applying for a proxy vote overall. 8% (1 out of 12) are not satisfied and the remainder (33%, 4 out of 12) are neutral.

4.5 Applying for a postal vote

Two-fifths of respondents (39%, 13 out of 33,) indicated have never applied for a postal vote

Of those respondents who have applied for a postal vote:

- the majority of respondents who have applied for a postal vote agree (70%, 14 out of 20) agree that they receive enough information about how to apply for a postal vote. 5% (1 out of 20) disagree, and the remainder are neutral 25% (4 out of 20).
- two-thirds of respondents (66%, 12 out of 18) agree that applying for a postal vote is straightforward. 17% (3 out of 18) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 18).
- just over half of respondents (55%, 10 out of 18) agree they are satisfied overall with the process for applying for a postal vote. 28% (5 out of 18) are not satisfied, and the remainder (17%, 3 out of 18) are neutral.

4.6 Election helpline

Just over half of respondents (55%, 19 out of 33) indicated they have never called the helpline.

Of those who have called the helpline:

- two-fifths of respondents (43%, 6 out of 14) agree that the helpline is easy to access. However, half of respondents disagree (50%, 7 out of 14), and the remainder are neutral (7%, 1 out of 14).

- one-third of respondents (33%, 5 out of 15) agree that staff are able to provide them with the information they require. However, three fifths (60%, 9 out of 15) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (7%, 1 out of 15).

5. Detailed findings

5.1 Information about Electoral Registration

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand. 38 respondents answered this question.

Table 1 below shows that:

- half of the respondents (50%, 19 out of 38) agree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand.
- only one-fifth of respondents (21%, 8 out of 38) disagree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand.
- 16% of respondents (6 out of 38) said they neither agree nor disagree.
- 13% (5 out of 38) said they had not seen any of this information.

Table 1: To what extent respondents agree or disagree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the information and publicity materials on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand?	%	Number
Strongly agree	18%	7
Tend to agree	32%	12
Neither agree or disagree	16%	6
Tend to disagree	16%	6
Strongly disagree	5%	2
Have not seen any of this information	13%	5
Total	100%	38

- 5.1.1** Of those who indicated they agree that the information and publicity materials are clear and easy to understand, almost three-fifths (58%, 11 out of 19) did not give a reason for their response.

Election and Electoral Registration Consultation Report

Of the 8 respondents (42%, 8 out of 19) who gave a reason why they **agree**, the most frequently mentioned type of reason was that the wording of electoral publicity materials was clear, straightforward, and easy to understand (5 respondents). The rest of the reasons are varied and listed below in table 2.

Table 2: Comments made by those who agree that the information and publicity how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand

Reasons why respondents agree that the information and publicity on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand:	
	Number of comments
The wording of electoral publicity materials was sufficient / clear, straightforward / easy to understand	5
Seen lots of posters locally	1
Seen information in libraries and in newspapers	1
Polling card received with instructions on	1
General awareness that the election is happening	1
Total number of different types of comments	9 (Number of respondents 8)

5.1.2 Of those who indicated they **disagree** that the information and publicity materials are clear and easy to understand, almost two-thirds (62%, 5 out of 8) did not give a reason for their response.

Of the 3 respondents (38%, 3 out of 8) who gave a reason why they **disagree**, comments again varied, citing: the instructions in the Household Enquiry Form are ambiguous (1); simple and basic information was impossible to source (1); the call centre was not functional (1). 1 respondent said that although own their experience of voting has been good they were aware that this is not the case for other Barnet residents.

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Table 3: Comments made by those who disagree the information and publicity material on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand

Reasons why respondents disagree that the information and publicity on how to register and the different options for voting are clear and easy to understand:	
	Number of comments
The instructions in the Household Enquiry Form are ambiguous	1
Simple and basic information was impossible to source	1
Dissatisfied with Election Office - was not functional	1
My experience of voting has been good but aware that this is not the case for other Barnet residents	1
Total number of different types of comments	4 (Number of respondents 3)

5.1.3 Of those who indicated that they **had not seen any of the information and publicity material on how to register**, three fifths (60%, 3 out of 5) did not write in any further comments.

The 2 respondents' comments related mainly to the local elections on May 5th 2016. Respondents cited: only discovered that they had been erroneously removed from the electoral roll once they realised they were the only member of the household who had not received their polling card (1); despite proof being sent in plenty of time the respondent was not added to the electoral roll in time to cast their vote in the Referendum (1).

Table 4: Comments made by those who had not seen any information

Reasons why respondents indicate that they have not seen any of the information and publicity on how to register and the different options for voting:	
	Number of comments
Only discovered that they had been erroneously removed from the electoral roll once they realised they were the only member of the household who had not received their polling card	1
Despite numerous phone calls, form filling in and proof being sent in plenty of time the respondent was not added to the electoral roll in time to cast their vote in the Referendum.	1
Only received their polling card – not aware what the other publicity was	1
Total number of different types of comments	3 (Number of respondents 2)

5.1.4 Of those who indicated that they **neither agree nor disagree** that the information and publicity materials are clear and easy to understand, 83% (5) did not give a reason for their answer.

The respondent who gave a reason cited: many people are unaware that they will not automatically appear on the electoral register unless they take action.

5.2 Registering to vote

Respondents were asked for their views on experiences of registering to vote in Barnet and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements. 34 respondents answered this question.

- three-quarters of respondents (74%, 25 out of 34) agree that they receive enough information about how to register to vote. 12% (4 out of 34) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (15%, 5 out of 34).
- three-fifths of respondents (61%, 20 out of 33) agree that the registering to vote process is straightforward. 3% (6 out of 33) disagree, and the remainder are either neutral 18% (6 out of 33) or indicated they did not know (3%, 1 out of 33).
- over half of respondents (55%, 18 out of 33) agree they are satisfied overall with the registering to vote process in Barnet. 30% (10 out of 33) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (15%, 5 out of 33).

Table 5: To what extent respondents agree or disagree with the statements about registering to vote

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree / agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree / disagree		Don't know / not sure		Total Number
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
I receive enough information about how to register to vote and the process.	74%	25	15%	5	12%	4	0%	0	34
The registering to vote process is straightforward	61%	20	18%	6	18%	6	3%	1	33
Overall, I am satisfied with the registering to vote process in Barnet	55%	18	15%	5	30%	10	0%	0	33

5.2.1 Reasons given why respondents disagree with the above statements on the registering process.

Of those who indicated that they disagree with any of the statements on registering to vote, 9 respondents gave reasons why they disagree across the three statements.

The most frequently mentioned reason related to the Household Enquiry Form being ambiguous, unclear, and forms sent out too frequently (3 respondents). The rest of

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the responses were varied, with many relating to the recent elections in May and June.

Table 6: Comments made by those who disagree with the statements on the registering to vote process

Reasons why respondents indicate that they disagree with the registering to vote process:	
	Number of comments
Household Enquiry Forms are unclear/ ambiguous / forms sent out too frequently	3
Prevented from voting due to staff incompetency	1
No postal vote arrived despite completing the form	1
Almost lost the right to vote due to canvasser's error	1
Never received a polling card for the EU referendum	1
Someone should have compared the electoral rolls to the previous year;	1
A concern that residents without access to the internet find it harder or impossible to add themselves to the electoral register	1
Experience of voting has been good but aware that this is not the case for other Barnet residents	1
Total number of different types of comments	10 (Number of respondents 9)

5.3 Polling Stations

Respondents were asked to indicate the name of their polling station. 27 respondents answered this question and the responses cover a range of polling stations. The complete list of the polling stations that respondents indicated they use can be found in Appendix 1.

Respondents were asked for their views on polling stations, experiences and to what extent they agree or disagree with various statements. 34 respondents answered this question.

Two respondents (6%, 2 out of 34) indicated they have never voted at a polling station.

Table 7 over the page shows that of those who have voted at a polling station:

- three-quarters of respondents (75%, 24 out of 32) agree that the information provided about their polling station is clear. 13% (4 out of 32) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (13%, 4 out of 32).
- three-fifths of respondents (59%, 19 out of 32) agree that voting at a polling station is straightforward. 19% (6 out of 32) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (22%, 7 out of 32).

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- three-fifths of respondents (59%, 19 out of 32) agree they are satisfied with the location of their polling station overall. 31% (10 out of 32) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (9%, 3 out of 32)

Table 7: To what extent respondents agree or disagree with the statements about polling stations

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree / agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree / disagree		Total Number Have voted at a polling station
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
The information provided about the location of my polling station is clear	75%	24	13%	4	13%	4	32
Voting at polling stations is straightforward	59%	19	22%	7	19%	6	32
Overall, I am satisfied with the location of my polling station	59%	19	9%	3	31%	10	32

5.3.1 Reasons given by those who disagree with the above statements on Polling Stations

Of those who indicated they disagree with any of the statements on polling stations 15 respondents gave reasons why they disagree across the three statements.

The most frequently mentioned reasons for disagreement were: schools should not be used as polling stations / childcare is expensive for parents when schools are closed (3); polling stations are too small (2); polling stations are too far away; information needs to be clearer / did not receive any information (2).

Table 8: Comments made by those who disagree with the statements about Polling Stations

Reasons why respondents indicate that they disagree with the statements about Polling Stations:	
	Number of comments
Schools should not be used as polling stations / childcare expensive for parents when schools closed	3
Polling stations are too small	2
Polling stations are too far away	2
Did not receive any information/information needs to be clearer	2
Difficulty parking	1
Problem with electoral roll but respondent had brought polling card so was able to vote	1
not accessible for disabled voters	1
Schools should be rotated if they are used	1
Voting process is too complicated	1
Had complained about the poor layout of polling station however was happy that the concerns were taken on board and changes to layout made in time for the Referendum	1
Own experience of polling station is satisfactory	1
Was disenfranchised from the mayoral election.	1
Poor quality arrangements at many Barnet polling stations	1
Total number of different types of comments	18 Comments (Number of respondents 15)

5.4 Applying for a proxy vote

Respondents were asked for their views on applying for a proxy vote and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements. 33 respondents answered this question.

Over a half of respondents (55%, 18 out of 33) indicated they have never applied for a proxy vote.

Table 9 over the page shows of those who have applied for a proxy vote:

- two-thirds of respondents (66%, 10 out of 15) agree that they receive enough information about how to apply for a proxy vote. 7% (1 out of 15) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 15).
- just over half of respondents (54%, 7 out of 13) agree that applying for a proxy vote is straightforward. 15% (2 out of 13) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 15).

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- nearly three-fifths (58%, 7 out of 12) are satisfied with the process for applying for a proxy vote overall. 8% (1 out of 12) are not satisfied and the remainder (33%, 4 out of 12) are neutral.

Table 9: To what extent respondents agree or disagree with the statements about applying for a proxy vote

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree / agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree / disagree		Total who had applied for a proxy vote
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
I receive enough information about how to apply for a proxy vote	66%	10	27%	4	7%	1	15
Applying for a proxy vote is straightforward	54%	7	31%	4	15%	2	13
Overall, I am satisfied with the process for applying for a proxy vote in Barnet	58%	7	33%	4	8%	1	12

5.4.1 Reasons given by those who disagree with the statements about applying for a proxy vote

Of those who indicated they disagree with any of the statements on applying for a proxy vote, only 3 respondents gave reasons why they disagree across the three statements.

One respondent requested a proxy vote but was advised it was too late, so applied for a postal vote, but both proxy and postal voting forms arrived before their holiday. The two remaining respondents indicated they disagree with the statements about applying for a proxy vote, however when reading the comments they appear to have never applied for a proxy vote which indicates their dissatisfaction is based on their preference to vote in person.

Table 10: Comments made by those who disagree with the statements

Reasons why respondents indicate that they disagree with the statements about applying for a proxy vote:	
	Number of comments
Has always voted in person.	1
Is a postal voter	1
Applied for a postal vote but advised it would not be sent out in time for the respondent going on holiday, so cancelled and asked for a proxy vote but both proxy and postal voting forms arrived before their holiday	1
Total number of different types of comments	3 Comments (Number of respondents 3)

5.5 Applying for a postal vote

Respondents were asked for their views on applying for a postal vote and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements. 33 respondents answered this question.

39% of respondents (13 out of 33) indicated they have never applied for a postal vote.

Table 11 below shows of those who have applied for a postal vote:

- the majority of respondents who have applied for a postal vote (70%, 14 out of 20) agree that they receive enough information about how to apply for a postal vote. 5% (1 out of 20) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (25%, 4 out of 20).
- two-thirds of respondents (66%, 12 out of 18) agree that applying for a postal vote is straightforward. 17% (3 out of 18) disagree, and again the remainder are neutral (27%, 4 out of 18).
- just over half of respondents (55%, 10 out of 18) agree they are satisfied overall with the process for applying for a postal vote. 28% (5 out of 18) are not satisfied, and the remainder (17%, 3 out of 18) are neutral.

Table 11: To what extent respondents agree or disagree with the statements about applying for a postal vote

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree / agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree / disagree		Total Number who had applied for a postal vote
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
I receive enough information about how to apply for a postal vote.	70%	14	25%	5	5%	1	20
Applying for a postal vote is straightforward	66%	12	17%	3	17%	3	18
Overall, I am satisfied with the process for applying for a postal vote	55%	10	17%	3	28%	5	18

5.5.1 Reasons given by those who disagree with the statements on applying for a postal vote

Of those who indicated they disagree with the statements on applying for a postal vote, 7 respondents gave reasons why they disagree across the three statements.

Four respondents said they disagree because they are hesitant to ever apply for a postal vote or have never applied for a postal vote or voted in person. The other reasons were mixed and are listed in table 12 over the page.

Table 12: Comments made by those who disagree with the statements on applying for a postal vote

Reasons why respondents indicate that they disagree with the statements about applying for a postal vote:	
	Number of comments
Hesitant to ever apply for a postal vote/ never had to apply for a postal vote / always voted in person	4
The voting process is too complicated.	1
Applied for a postal vote but advised it would not be sent out in time for the respondent going on holiday, so cancelled and asked for a proxy vote but both proxy and postal voting forms arrived before their holiday	1
Cannot remember as the election was over two and a half months before this review.	1
A family member has never received their postal vote.	1
Knows that a significant number of residents found the process to be deeply unsatisfactory	1
Total number of different types of comments	9 Comments (Number of respondents 7)

5.6 Election helpline

Respondents were asked for their views on the election helpline and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements. 33 respondents answered this question.

Just over half (55%, 19 out of 33) of respondents indicated they have never called the helpline.

Table 13 over the page shows of those who have called the helpline:

- just over two-fifths of respondents (43%, 6 out of 14) agree that the helpline is easy to access. However, 50% (7 out of 14) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (7%, 1 out of 14).
- one-third of respondents (33%, 5 out of 15) agree that staff are able to provide them with the information they require. 60% (9 out of 15) disagree, and the remainder are neutral (7%, 1 out of 15).

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Table 13: To what extent respondents agree or disagree with the statements about the election helpline

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree / agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree / disagree		Total respondents who have never called the helpline
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
The helpline is easy to access	43%	6	7%	1	50%	7	14
Staff are able to provide me with the information I require	33%	5	7%	1	60%	9	15

5.6.1 Reasons given by those who disagree with the statements about the election helpline

Of those who indicated they disagree with the statements about the election helpline vote, 10 respondents gave a reason why they disagree across the two statements.

The most frequently mentioned reason for disagreement was that the telephone lines were busy; callers could not get through or leave a message (5).

Table 14: Comments made by those who disagree with the statements about the election helpline

Reasons why respondents indicate that they disagree with the statements about the election helpline:	
	Number of comments
Lines busy / couldn't get through / couldn't leave a message	5
Poor service / not fit for purpose	2
Letters went missing	1
No support for staff	1
Unhelpful staff	1
Emails not responded to	1
Only phoned once about this review	1
Inconsistent information	1
Telephoned to cancel their postal vote but still received both a postal and proxy vote in error	1
Total number of different types of comments	14 Comments (Number of respondents 10)

5.7 Any other comments

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments to make about the Elections Service in Barnet.

Of the 20 respondents who gave a comment, the most frequently mentioned type of comments were that the respondent did not have a problem voting in Barnet (3); the respondent was prevented from voting (2); received a poor service (2); the council should use facilities other than schools (2).

Table 15 over the page shows the comments that were received:

Election and Electoral Registration Consultation Report

Table 15: General comments made about the Elections Service in Barnet

Do you have any comments to make about the Elections Service in Barnet?	
	Number of comments
Did not have a problem voting in Barnet	3
The council should use facilities other than schools	2
Prevented from voting	2
Received a poor service	2
The council should rotate schools	1
Voter wrongly removed from the register	1
Almost denied right to vote	1
Locations of polling station - request to review distances that voters need to travel	1
Request to relocate a polling station so that it had disabled access	1
Request for a change to the layout of a polling station which had been actioned in time for the EU Referendum	1
Impossible to complain by phone	1
No acknowledgement of complaint	1
In recent years, whole streets have been left out of the electoral register, depriving residents of their right to vote.	1
Brought polling card but prevented from voting and could not return later.	1
Never received a polling card	1
Imperative to have an up to date electoral register	1
Concern about the loss of knowledgeable staff who know how to run elections.	1
Action needs to be taken to ensure that what happened at the last election never happens again	1
Spend money and do it properly.	1
Those responsible for the problems need to be held to account.	1
A voter was unhappy about being approached as they entered a polling station at the General Election by someone wearing a political rosette who asked to see their polling card	1
Suggestion for the electoral roll to be analysed on a Ward basis to determine whether there was a loss of right to vote in the Mayoral Election and if there is a difference of more than 5% in the turnout, then the Mayoral election should be re-run	1
No backup system was in place	1
Lack of information	1
The investigation of the 2010 General Election was a 'whitewash'.	1
The findings from the Mayoral/GLA Elections in 2016 are 'worthless' and the electors deserve a full and independent review.	1
Total number of different types of comments	31 Comments (Number of respondents 20)

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Appendix 1: Respondents' allocated polling station

What is the name of your allocated polling station?		
Response	%	Number
Don't know / not sure	12.5%	3
Annunciation Catholic Junior School (The), The Meads, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 9HQ	8.3%	2
Deansbrook School, Hale Drive, NW7 3ED	8.3%	2
Essex Hall, 5 Essex Park London N3 1ND	8.3%	2
Barnet Multi-Cultural Community Centre, Algernon Road, Hendon NW4 3TA	0.0%	1
Brunswick Park Road, Southgate N11 (Portable Office in the Car Park)	4.2%	1
Chalgrove School, Chalgrove Gardens, Finchley N3 3PL	4.2%	1
Eversfield Centre (The), 11 Eversfield Gardens Mill Hill NW7 2AE	4.2%	1
Freehold Community Centre 9 Alexandra Road, Muswell Hill N10 2EY	4.2%	1
Harvester Car Park Selvage Lane Edgware Middlesex HA8 9RZ (Portable Office)	4.2%	1
New Barnet Community Centre 48/50 Victoria Road, New Barnet EN4 9PF	4.2%	1
New Bevan Baptist Church Hall, Grove Road, Barnet Herts EN4 9DF	4.2%	1
New Stonegrove Community Centre, 5 Hayling Way, Edgware HA8 8BN	4.2%	1
St Marks Church Hall, Potters Road, New Barnet Herts EN5 5HY	4.2%	1
St Paul's Centre, 50 Long Lane, London N3 2PU	4.2%	1
St Mary & Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church Hall Cranbourne Gardens Golders Green NW11 0HU	0.0%	1
St Peter Le Poer Church Hall, Albion Avenue London N10 1AE	4.2%	1
St Stephens Church Hall, 1 Spring Close, Bells Hill, Barnet EN5 2UR	4.2%	1
Stanford Road, Friern Barnet N11 3HX (Scout and Guide Hall)	4.2%	1
Summerside School, Crossway, Finchley N12 0QU	4.2%	1
Sunnyfields School, Greyhound Hill, London NW4 4JH	0.0%	1
Trinity Church, Rodborough Road Childs Hill NW11 8NH (Harris Room)	4.2%	1
Total responses	100%	27



General Functions Committee
9 Novmeber 2016

Title	Nominations to School Governing Bodies
Report of	Head of Governance
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Schedule of Vacancies on School Governing Bodies
Officer Contact Details	Maria Lugangira, Governance maria.lugangira@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 2761

Summary

The Committee is asked to nominate representatives in respect of local authority governor vacancies on the school governing bodies listed in Appendix A.

Recommendation

- 1. That the Committee nominates representatives in respect of local authority governor vacancies on the school governing bodies listed in Appendix A.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Committee has a responsibility to recommend appointments to vacancies in respect of local authority governors on school governing bodies. This assists each school’s governing body to be fully constituted and exercise its duties in an efficient and effective manner.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 All state maintained primary, secondary and special schools are accountable to their governing bodies, which in turn are accountable to parents and the wider community. The General Functions Committee (or Full Council where an urgent decision is required) nominates candidates for appointment to local authority governor vacancies.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 None

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Head of Governance in the Assurance Group of the local authority will notify the governing body of the nomination made. It is for the governing body to decide whether the local authority nominee meets any stated eligibility criteria and, if it chooses to reject the candidate on that basis, the Committee will invite the governing body to explain their reasons for refusal to the local authority via the Head of Governance.
- 4.2 General Functions Committee minutes (23 June 2015) state that where a governing body chooses to reject a candidate because they do not meet any stated eligibility criteria, it should (be invited to) explain its decision to the Head of Governance who will inform the General Functions Committee.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 To ensure that the council has robust governance arrangements that enable the delivery of its objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan, its decision making structures will be kept under review to provide effective opportunities for resident participation and engagement.
- 5.1.2 Through the timely execution of its functions, the Committee can assist school governing bodies to fulfil their duties and contribute to the corporate priorities to make sure Barnet is a place:
- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
 - where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
 - where responsibility is shared, fairly
 - where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 None in the context of this report.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 is not directly applicable in the context of this report.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Responsibility for nominating local authority representatives to school governing bodies is attributed to the General Functions Committee in accordance with Annex A to Responsibility for Functions. Section 1.8 of Responsibility for Functions, Functions of Full Council provides that Full Council can make appointments to school governing bodies where an urgent decision is required:

[Section 15 London Borough of Barnet Constitution - Responsibility for Functions](#)

5.4.2 All governing bodies of maintained schools are required to be constituted under either the:

[School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)¹](#)

[School Governance \(Federations\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)²](#)

4.3.3 In these Regulations “local authority governor” means a person who:

- (a) is nominated by the local authority; and
- (b) is appointed as a governor by the governing body having, in the opinion of the governing body, the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and having met any additional eligibility criteria set by the governing body.

5.4.3 The governing body must not be smaller than seven members, and must include (subject to the requirements regarding foundation governors in qualifying foundation schools and voluntary aided schools):

- at least two parent governors;
- the headteacher (unless the headteacher resigns as a governor);
- one staff governor;
- one, and only one, local authority governor; and
- the governing body may appoint as many additional co-opted governors as they consider necessary subject to conditions in the regulations.

5.4.4 An individual eligible to be a staff governor at the school may not be appointed as a local authority governor.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 None in the context of this report.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

The Committee is advised that the 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due

¹ [The School Governance \(Constitution and Federations\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)

² [The School Governance \(Constitution and Federations\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)

regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.6.1 All sectors of the community are eligible for nomination to the vacancies. It is expected that all political parties will promote equalities and diversity when making nominations to vacancies.

5.6.2 In delivering this Corporate Plan, the Council's priorities and the actions it takes to deliver them will reflect our Strategic Equalities Objective which is that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect, and will have equal access to quality services which provide value to the tax payer.

5.7 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.7.1 Not applicable.

5.8 **Insight**

5.8.1 Insight data has not been used to inform the decision required.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools March 2015 being statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and local authorities in England published by the Department for Education:

[The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools Statutory Guidance.pdf](#)

The Governors' Handbook published by the Department for Education:
[Governors' Handbook.pdf](#)

GENERAL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE – 9 November 2016

VACANCIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

The General Functions Committee is asked to make nominations to the vacancies shown below and shaded grey.
The Governor Support Service is invited to nominate a representative after a position has been vacant for three months or more.

BARNET EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Michael Jordan Resigned 26 January 2016	Vacancy*				

DOLLIS JUNIOR SCHOOL - NW7 3ED					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Cllr Sury Khatri (C) Appointment expired 14 November 2015	Vacancy*				

* Governor Support has advised that the governing body has expressed a preference for a candidate with HR and/or PR experience. The Governing Body will also consider someone with Education skills.

LIVINGSTONE SCHOOL - EN4 9BU					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Liz Pearson (C) Resigned 21 January 2016	Vacancy*				

* Governor Support has advised that the governing body has expressed a preference for a candidate with Early Years' Experience and commitment.

ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL - N3 1BT					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Nigel Wildish (GS) Appointment expiring	Expiring*				

* Governor Support has advised that Mr Wildish wishes to be reappointed

SUNNYFIELDS SCHOOL – NW4 4JH					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Mr Alan Maund (C) Resigned October 2016	Vacancy				

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL – N12 OJP					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Ms Karen Spooner (GS) Resigned September 2016	Vacancy*				LOUISE MILLER

THE ORION AND GOLDBEATERS					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Cllr Gil Sargeant (L) Appointment expiring	Expiring*				

* Governor Support has advised that Councillor Sargeant wishes to be reappointed

WOODCROFT SCHOOL – HA8 0QF					
Current Representative & Period of Appointment	Status	Nominations			
		Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Governor Support
Cllr Claire Farrier (L) Resigned 7 March 2016	Vacancy*				

*The Governing Body is seeking a candidate with an Education background, who is able to meet the requirements of the role of school governor regarding regular visits and monitoring.

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General Functions Committee
9 November 2016

Title	General Functions Committee Work Programme
Report of	Head of Governance
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Committee Work Programme 2016-17
Officer Contact Details	Maria Lugagnira, Governance Service maria.lugangira@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 2761

Summary

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the items included in the 2016-17 work programme in Appendix A.

Recommendation

- 1. That the Committee consider and comment on the items included in the 2016-17 work programme in Appendix A.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The General Functions Committee’s work programme 2016-17 indicates forthcoming items of business.
- 1.2 The work programme of this Committee is intended to be a responsive tool which will be updated on a rolling basis following each meeting, for the inclusion of areas which may arise through the course of the year.

- 1.3 The Committee is empowered to agree its priorities and determine its own schedule of work within the programme having regard to its terms of reference.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The compilation and review of work programme is intended to assist the Committee to plan and manage its work across the municipal year.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Not applicable in the context of this report.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Any alterations made by the Committee to its Work Programme will be published on the Council's website.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Committee Work Programme is in accordance with the Council's strategic objectives and priorities as stated in the Corporate Plan 2015-20.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 None in the context of this report.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 The terms of reference of the General Functions Committee is included in the Constitution Responsibility for Functions, Annex A:
[Section 15 London Borough of Barnet Constitution - Responsibility for Functions](#)

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 None in the context of this report.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 None in the context of this report.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 Not applicable.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**London Borough of Barnet
General Functions Committee Work
Programme
November 2016 – March 2017**

Contact: Governance Service 020 8359 2761 maria.lugangira@barnet.gov.uk

Title of Report	Overview of decision	Report Of (<i>officer</i>)	Issue Type (Non key/Key/Urgent)
9 November 2016			
Review of Elections in Barnet	To receive the findings of the review of the way in which elections in Barnet are delivered and how the electoral services function operates.	Interim Chief Executive and Returning Officer	Non Key
Nomination of Local Authority Representatives on School Governing Bodies	To nominate candidates to vacancies on school governing bodies.	Head of Governance	Non Key
6 December 2016			
Recruitment and Retention Scheme	A report detailing the development of two schemes dealing with requests to consider salary supplements for hard-to-fill posts.	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service Director of Human Resources	Non Key
Adult Social Care Mental Health Staff Restructure Final Proposals	A report outlining the outcomes of the staff consultation to restructure the Social Care Mental Health service in order to deliver efficiencies and better services to residents as per the Barnet Mental Health Enablement Model.:	Adults and Communities	Non Key

Subject	Decision requested	Report Of	Issue Type
Nomination and Appointment of Representatives on School Governing Bodies	To receive an update on the Assurance Group project.	Head of Governance	Non Key
Representatives on Outside Bodies	To review the Council's policy on indemnities for representatives on outside bodies.	Head of Governance	Non Key
16 January 2017			
Lease of meeting rooms at Hendon Town Hall	To review the agreements pertaining to the shared use of the meeting room facilities at Hendon Town Hall.	Director of Resources	Non Key
Annual Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places for Elections	To receive the findings of the annual review of polling districts and polling places for use at elections.	Chief Executive	Non Key
Annual Pay Policy Statement	To receive the annual review of the Council's pay policy statement together with any amendments	Director for Human Resources	Non Key

Subject	Decision requested	Report Of	Issue Type
20 March 2017			
TBC			
Unassigned			
Members IT and Telephony	To receive an update following the members' workshop on IT and telephony.	Head of Governance	Non Key
Members' Notional Allowance	To consider the arrangements in respect of members' notional allowances.	Head of Governance	Non Key
Performance Related Pay	A report detailing the development of a performance related pay scheme for those staff assessed for two consecutive years as outstanding through the annual appraisal scheme.	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service Director of Human Resources	Non Key
Indemnities for council representatives on outside bodies	A report concerning a policy on indemnities for council representatives on outside bodies.	Monitoring Officer, Director of Assurance	Non Key

Subject	Decision requested	Report Of	Issue Type
Approval of premises for Weddings and Civil Partnership Registrations	This report seeks approval for an application received from a premises to be licensed as a venue for marriages and civil partnership registrations in pursuance of Section 46A of the marriage Act 1949 and the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and in pursuance of Section 6 (3A) (a) the Civil Partnership Act 2004.	Proper Officer for Registration	Non Key
Nominations to Vacancies on School Governing Bodies	That the committee nominates candidates to fill the vacancies on school governing bodies.	Head of Governance	Non Key
Appointments to Outside Bodies	To appoint representatives to outside bodies.	Head of Governance	Non Key
Staff matters	Salaries and conditions of service other than those within the remit of Chief Officer Appointment Panel.	Director of Human Resources	Non Key
Information Management	To determine Member requests for non-committee information as specified in the Members' Information Management Policy.	Head of Information Management	Non Key

Subject	Decision requested	Report Of	Issue Type
Hendon Town Hall Facilities	Following a referral from Group leaders or the Chairman, to comment on any proposed changes incurring expenditure over £5,000 which could affect the provision of facilities for Members.	Director of Resources	Non Key
Communications with the Public by Text and Social Media Policy for Staff	The Head of Information Management was requested (11 Nov 2015) to ensure that any plans to approve the use of any video media software by staff (to communicate with the public) be brought back to the General Functions Committee for comment and approval.	Head of Information Management	Non Key
Health and Safety	<p>To receive quarterly monitoring statistics (Safety, Health and Well-being) on a twice-yearly basis).</p> <p>And</p> <p>Annual report - To monitor and review arrangements for managing occupational health and safety risks.</p> <p>To note the council's high level health and safety risk profile, a summary of health and safety performance and the strategic priorities for improvements over the subsequent period.</p>	Commissioning Lead – Health, Safety & Wellbeing	Non Key

Subject	Decision requested	Report Of	Issue Type
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