

	<p>General Functions Committee</p> <p>29 June 2016</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Terms of Reference for Elections and Electoral Registration Review</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Interim Chief Executive and Returning Officer</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Key</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Davina Fiore, Director of Assurance and Monitoring Officer davina.fiore@barnet.gov.uk Tel.020 8359 6373</p>

<p>Summary</p>
<p>Barnet residents experienced problems voting first thing in the morning in the Mayoral and GLA elections on May 5th 2016. This serious problem resulted in an independent investigation being carried out which reported to Barnet Council’s General Functions Committee on 9th June. It was recommended and agreed that a wider review of the elections and electoral registration function be carried out. External challenge and a public call for evidence will be part of this. This report is to agree the Terms of Reference for the review.</p>

<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>1. That the Committee approve the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 for the review or amend and approve the draft terms of reference.</p>

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report is needed to agree the terms of reference set out in appendix 1 for the planned review of elections and electoral registration.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Independent Investigator recommended that this review take place to ensure that public confidence is regained in the electoral processes in Barnet and this was agreed by General Functions Committee on 9th June 2016.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Not to carry out a review of the functions. This is not recommended as it is very important that public confidence is regained.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 A project plan will be developed and the project board will be convened with external challenge and a call for evidence from the public. The review will take place and the review and its recommendations will be reported back together with an action plan (if necessary) to General Functions Committee on 9th November. Recommendations will be implemented prior to the local elections in 2018.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 It is a council 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. This report sets out the work which will be undertaken to ensure future elections in Barnet are conducted appropriately.

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

- 5.2.1 All actual and necessary costs of national elections and referenda are met by the Cabinet Office, therefore it is not anticipated that any additional resources will be required for these.

- 5.2.2 The cost of local electoral registration is funded by the Council, although there is sometimes one off grant funding available. The costs of local elections are funded by the Council and any recommendations resulting from the planned wider review, may lead to additional costs. The Council is obliged to meet any additional resource requirements that the Returning Officer considers necessary. Increases in on-going costs in relation to local elections or registration will be reported and agreed as part of the detailed review to be brought back to this committee in November 2016.

- 5.2.3 The investigation costs relating to the external challenge element of the review will be met from the risk reserve.

5.3 **Social Value**
Not applicable.

5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 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”. The Returning Officer role carries with it a personal responsibility for delivering the election.

5.5 **Risk Management**

5.5.1 The purpose of the review is to identify and implement service improvements, and in doing so to minimise risk.

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
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. Any recommendations coming from this review will need to be evaluated for any equality implications.

5.7 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.7.1 The Group Leaders, Cllr Jack Cohen and the Electoral Commission have been consulted on the draft terms of reference for the review and their amendments have been incorporated.

5.8 **Insight**

5.8.1 Not applicable.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 General Functions Committee 9th June 2016

6.2 Electoral Commission Guidance: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>