

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 29TH JANUARY 2019

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: NORTH SOMERSET DISTRICT AND PARISH
ELECTIONS 2ND MAY 2019**

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING:
NICHOLAS BRAIN, HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES.
PHILIPPA PENNEY, ELECTORAL SERVICES AND SCRUTINY MANAGER.**

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel notes the arrangements for the forthcoming North Somerset District and Parish elections scheduled to take place on Thursday, 2nd May 2019, and offers any observations for consideration by the Returning Officer.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report summarises the planning and actions undertaken to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the forthcoming North Somerset District and Parish elections.

2. POLICY

Quality places: Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions

3. DETAILS

As members will be aware, all out elections will take place for North Somerset Council and the town and parish councils throughout the North Somerset area on Thursday, 2nd May 2019.

To give an idea of the scale of the operation, at the last set of local elections in 2015 (which were also combined with a United Kingdom Parliamentary election) the eligible electorate was approximately 163,000 of which approximately 111,670 exercised their right to vote. Approximately 25,000 voters chose to use a postal vote, whilst the remainder voted via the 126 ballot boxes located across 126 polling stations at 89 separate polling premises. 319 candidates contested the total district and parish seats. 358 polling staff were deployed with a total staff of over 470 including the counting, transport, IT and contact centre colleagues.

Preparations for the May elections are progressing with premises booked for the postal vote, polling and count venues. Staff appointments are currently underway along with

completion of those processes that can be undertaken ahead of the notice of election and nominations period.

A draft timetable is attached showing those key dates that any potential candidates along with prospective agents will wish to be aware of:

• Publication of Notice of Election	19/03/2019	
• Start of Nominations	20/03/2019	
• Close of Receipt of Nominations	03/04/2019	4.00pm
• Delivery of Notice of Withdrawal of Candidature	03/04/2019	4.00pm
• Appointment of Election Agents (District only)	03/04/2019	4.00pm
• Publication of Statements of Persons Nominated	04/04/2019	4.00pm
• Last Date for Registration - deadline for applications	12/04/2019	Midnight
• Receipt of Postal Vote and Postal Proxy applications	15/04/2019	5.00pm
• Bulk issue of postal votes	18/04/2019	
• Receipt of ordinary Proxy Vote Applications	24/04/2019	5.00pm
• Appointment of Poll and Count Agents	25/04/2019	
• Day of Poll (polling stations open 7.00am to 10.00pm)	02/05/2019	
• Verification of the votes (following close of poll)	02/05/2019	
• Counting of the votes	03/05/2019	

Additional information is available for candidates and agents at local elections in England on the Electoral Commission website, via the following link:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-in-england>

4. CONSULTATION

The process for conduct of elections is prescribed by legislation and thus not subject to consultation. The legislation is supplemented by guidance from the Electoral Commission.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Election costs at combined local elections are split between the district council and the parish councils. North Somerset Council costs will be met from the elections reserve and the parish councils will be recharged following the elections.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The conduct of the election including the polling and count rules are governed by the Representation of the Peoples Acts and subordinate regulations.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

N/A

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

All polling stations and electoral service venues remain compliant the relevant disability legislation.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Electoral Commission Risk Register – local elections 2019

Electoral Commission website – local elections in England and Wales:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/local-elections-in-england-and-wales>