

ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

16 July 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Purchase (Chairman), Jones (Vice-Chair), Bower, Cooper, Goodheart, Gunner, Lury and Oppler

Councillor Bennett was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In view of the nature of the issues to be discussed in Minute number 4 [Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations in the Arun District 2019 – Stage 1] and Minute number 5 [Review of District and Town/Parish Elections 2 May 2019 and European Parliamentary Election 23 May 2019], it was recognised that all Members' of the Sub-Committee had a Personal Interest in their capacity as having been candidates and electors during both elections.

Councillors Purchase, Goodheart and Mrs Cooper also declared a further Personal Interest as they had acted as an agent during the elections.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 were approved by the Sub-Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. START TIMES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2019/2020 be 6.00 pm.

4. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS IN THE ARUN DISTRICT 2019 - STAGE 1

Nigel Lynn, Electoral Registration Officer introduced this report to the Sub-Committee and provided an overview of timetable and process for the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations. It was confirmed that the timetable would allow the Council to meet its statutory obligations and complete the review within the required timescale and by 31 January 2020. Although the team had been aware of the timing it would be a considerable additional workload on top of the unexpected European Election in May. The Elections Team would highlight any resource issue to the Returning Officer and Chief Executive.

Electoral Review Sub-Committee - 16.07.19

The key points highlighted to the Sub-Committee were:

- That this was a formal review that takes place every 5 years
- The importance of considering signage at each Polling Station location as well as accessibility for all voters
- Visits for Polling Stations where it is believed there could be issues on an Election day

There were no comments from the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee agreed to the timetable and process for review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations as set out in the report.

5. REVIEW OF DISTRICT AND TOWN/PARISH ELECTIONS 2 MAY 2019 AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 23 MAY 2019.

Nigel Lynn, Electoral Registration Officer introduced this report to the Sub-Committee and provided an overview of key facts, figures, information and feedback on the Arun District and Town/Parish Election held on 2 May 2019 and the European Parliamentary Election held on 23 May 2019.

Key Points highlighted were:

- These Elections were particularly challenging & thanks to all team members who worked hard to ensure that these elections were executed successfully
- Staffing remained the biggest challenge as with any Election a total of 320 volunteer staff are needed to run an Election on the day and at the Count, as well as ensuring that the day-to-day running of the Council continues as usual
- The timetable for running Elections in parallel was a difficult challenge
- Minimal complaints had been received, the main trend for these complaints were surrounding Royal Mail and the Postal Voting process was still viewed to be a complicated process for Voters.
- Printing is the biggest risk to any Election as the Council is reliant on 4 or 5 printing companies to deliver.
- 3278 election related calls had been received by Arun Direct and dealt with during this Election period
- Kangaroo Boards were used for the first time at the count and the feedback overall was these were a useful tool to help with that part of the process
- Both Elections were successful, with a transparent and fair process having been followed
- A thank you was given to all members of staff who were involved in this process.

Comments made by the Sub-Committee were:

- Look into a better PA system and Platform area that incorporates wheelchair access for future Elections.
- Candidates found the mobile phone ban difficult and unnecessary, understanding that this is due to the secrecy of the count, a suggestion made was to consider a separate space within the count room to be sectioned off that would allow for use of mobile phones. Although the Chief Executive explained that the previous room available had now been converted into the gym expansion.
- Communication between the Returning Officer and candidates immediately before results were announced, was raised as a matter that needed further consideration for the future.
- Layout of the count room, suggestions were put forward to improve the layout of the room from a Candidates perspective and it was agreed would be looked into in more detail to ensure all options could be considered for future Elections. Members were asked to provide further information on alternatives which they had seen working elsewhere.
- Regarding Poll cards a suggestion put forward was to consider printing a map of the location of the Polling Station on the back of the Poll Card which would help voters ensure they attended the correct Polling Station.
- Some discussion was had regarding the time of declaration on the day of the Count, it was felt that this process took too long and it was requested to be looked into, to see if the process could be improved.

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

(The meeting concluded at 7.10 pm)