

ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

11 February 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Jones (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Mrs Cooper, Goodheart, Lury and Oppler

Apologies: Councillors Purchase and Gunner

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2019 were approved by the Sub-Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. GENERAL ELECTION DECEMBER 2019 REPORT

The Sub-Committee received the General Election report from the Chief Executive, who advised Members that the snap Parliamentary Election had been called after the last meeting of this Sub-Committee. While there had been some challenges that arose due to the election having been called with such short notice, he was pleased to confirm that the teams involved delivered the UKPGE (United Kingdom Parliamentary General Election) efficiently and alongside business as usual.

The Group Head of Policy then presented the report to the Sub-Committee and in doing so, drew Members attention to the following key points;

- Voting turnout was lower than expected, however not out of sync with previous General Elections
- Arun District Council's Communications Team and Arun Direct Team supported promoting key messages to the public, via the Website & Social Media Pages and made sure that people were signposted to where more information could be found as well as managing the high volume of requests and queries that came in across other communication channels.
- Between 1 November and 26 November 2019, 3,994 new electors registered to vote.
- December presented the Council with a number of weather-related issues; however, these issues were mitigated with extra heaters, lighting and absorbent mats where required.
- There was a greater focus on security for the election, the Chief Executive worked with the Chief Inspector ahead of time and Police were present for the entire duration of the Count.

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- The count went smoothly and the decision to start verification as soon as the boxes arrived proved pivotal. The count finished at 04:35am.

In referring to the letter from Chloe Smith MP, the Group Head of Policy highlighted a number of changes that the current Government were intending to put in place, with an update due by Summer 2020;

- Replacing the Fixed Term Parliaments Act;
- Ensuing updated and equal Parliamentary boundaries;
- Introduction of identification to vote at polling stations; and
- Making it easier for British expats to vote in Parliamentary elections, and removing the 15-year limit on their voting rights

In summary the Chief Executive told Members that he was pleased with how our arrangements for the election ran in practice and believed a number of other objectives were achieved also;

- Avoiding challenge to the election
- Compliance with legislation and Electoral Commission Guidance
- Maximised Voter turnout
- Accurate verification and results

He expressed his thanks to the Election Team and the wider teams who provided help and support to ensure that this election was one that delivered professionalism and consistency.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support expressed his thanks to all involved with not just this election, but for all of the elections that had taken place during 2019. He stated that as a candidate he felt that everything went smoothly and that the count had been uneventful which was a good thing.

The Sub-Committee noted the report and

RESOLVED – That

1. they agreed to support the Acting Returning Officer to implement any changes needed for future elections

(The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm)