

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## ELECTORAL REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE 28 JANUARY 2021

### PART A : REPORT

**SUBJECT: Elections Update for May 2021**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn, Electoral Registration Officer**  
**DATE: 18 January 2021**  
**EXTN: 37600**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report sets out arrangements for the Elections to be held on 6 May 2021, including changes as a result of the current pandemic

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To note the report

#### **1. BACKGROUND:**

2. Following the postponement of Elections in May 2020 the elections/polls taking place on 6 May 2021 are as follows:
  - Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) election for Sussex (Brighton and Hove are in charge of the election for Sussex)
  - West Sussex County Council (WSCC) elections
  - Brookfield District ward by-election
  - Littlehampton Town Council by-election – Beach ward
  - Littlehampton Town Council by-election – Wickbourne ward
  - Walberton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (to be confirmed)
3. The count for WSCC and local by-elections will take place on Friday 7 May 2021 and for the PCC on Monday 10 May.
4. We have had to consider the arrangements for the elections very carefully to ensure a covid secure environment for all stakeholders, that is voters, candidates, agents and staff. We have been working with the Returning Officers for the PCC and WSCC and Health and Safety at Arun District Council. We have also taken into account detailed advice from the Electoral Commission (EC) and the Association of Electoral Administrators, the professional body for Electoral

Services who work very closely with the Electoral Commission.

5. We have carried out coronavirus risk assessments at all polling stations, reviewed arrangements for postal vote opening and the counts and contacted staff to ascertain how willing they are to work under what levels of coronavirus restrictions. This has been extremely challenging for the Elections Team who have also been carrying out a new canvass process for the first time this year at the same time. Arrangements to be considered are:
  - Covid secure voting – a lot of this is set out in Appendix 1 – the letter to all households which was sent out on 15 January.
  - Securing sufficient staff
  - PPE including sanitiser, masks, gloves, Perspex screens
  - Cleaning of polling venues before, during and after voting
  - Count arrangements and social distancing
  - Safe postal vote opening for staff and observers
  - Legal requirements around proxy votes
6. There is a concern that all stages of the elections process could take longer than normal due to the limits on staff and observers at the key venues. This is due in part to the requirement for staff ‘bubbles’ as we cannot risk all staff involved in postal vote opening becoming ill immediately before polling day and the count. This also applies to a very small elections team and the wider election control team of senior staff who will not be able to work together in the normal way prior to the elections as they are all required at the election.
7. A number of polling stations have had to change because they cannot be made covid secure. Voters are encouraged to make alternative arrangements, postal or proxy votes, where they do not wish to vote at their new polling station if it has changed. These arrangements will only be in place whilst there is a risk because of the pandemic. There are varying estimates from the Government, but even the most optimistic do not have all adults vaccinated by 6 May.
8. Agents and members were sent a copy of these letters, the election timetable (included here at Appendix 2) and information on briefings. All the information is available on our website and as more information is made available this will be updated and e-mails sent to Agents and Candidates.

**2. PROPOSAL(S):**

To note the contents of the report

**3. OPTIONS:**

To note the contents of the report

<b>4. CONSULTATION:</b>		
Has consultation been undertaken with:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Relevant Town/Parish Council		<b>x</b>
Relevant District Ward Councillors		<b>x</b>
Other groups/persons (please specify)		<b>x</b>
<b>5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial		<b>x</b>
Legal		<b>x</b>
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		<b>x</b>
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		<b>x</b>
Sustainability		<b>x</b>
Asset Management/Property/Land		<b>x</b>
Technology		<b>x</b>
Safeguarding		<b>x</b>
Other (please explain)	<b>x</b>	
<b>6. IMPLICATIONS:</b> Ensuring the right of residents to vote safely in the May 2021 elections		

<b>7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:</b> To inform Members about the process for and concerns around the May 2021 elections
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<b>8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>
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