

<b>ELECTIONS COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	DOWNHAM WARD BY-ELECTION REVIEW	
<b>Key Decision</b>	n/a	Item No. 7
<b>Ward</b>	Downham	
<b>Contributors</b>	Kath Nicholson, Head of Law and Dave Kingdon, Interim Electoral Services Manager	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: 26 MARCH, 2009

### 1. Purpose

This report looks briefly at the recent Downham Ward by-election arrangements.

### 2. Recommendations

That the Committee note this report.

### 3. Introduction

- 3.1 The by-election resulted from the resignation of two Councillors. The basic statistics relating to the by-election, which was held on Thursday 19 February, are as follows -

Candidates – nine - one British National Party, two Conservative Party, two Green Party, two Labour Party and two Liberal Democrat.

Electorate – 9,756

Postal voters - 1191 (12.2% of total electorate)

\*Polling stations - 6

Overall turnout – 27.4%

Postal vote turnout – 61.5%

\* because of the unavailability of the polling places in polling district EDE and EDF, it was necessary to hire two portakabin units to provide suitable alternative polling facilities for local voters. One of these, Rangefield Primary School, which was undergoing major refurbishment, was located at the designated site. The other, a replacement for the Club House at Millwall Football Club Training Ground, which was unavailable, was located conveniently at the junction of Bromley Road and Old Bromley Road. Other polling places were as used for the May 2007, Greater London Authority elections.

#### **4. Candidate/Election Agent feedback**

- 4.1 In line with a developing performance standards regime for Electoral Registration and Returning Officers being introduced nationally by the Electoral Commission (which is to be the subject of separate report to the Committee shortly), the opportunity was taken with the by-election, to introduce a Candidate/Election Agent feedback survey. The survey form attached at appendix 1 was sent to the 9 candidates and 5 Election Agents appointed and 9 (64%) were returned. It will be seen that the survey covered the whole election process, from nomination through to the Count. It should be noted that not all of the respondents commented on all of the various issues raised.
- 4.2 The Committee will note that, in the main, comments made are quite positive and the responses generally will be used to inform arrangements to be made at future elections. The issues relating to non delivery of poll cards and, to a lesser extent, postal votes, have been taken up with Royal Mail. In 5 cases where non-receipt of postal voting papers was notified to Electoral Services, replacement papers were hand delivered to the persons affected. The comments in respect of polling place location have been noted and will be considered at the next review of polling arrangements undertaken by the Council.

#### **5. Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising.

#### **6. Legal implications**

There are no legal implications arising.

#### **7. Crime and disorder implications**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising.

#### **8. Equalities implications**

There are no equality implications arising.

#### **9. Environmental implications**

There are no environmental implications arising.

### **Background documents**

Responses received from various Candidates / Election Agents

If there are any queries on this report please contact Dave Kingdon – 020 8314 6907