

Agenda Item 3

Briefing: Results of the Annual Electoral Registration Canvass

Purpose/Background

- It is a legal requirement for the Electoral Registration Officer to carry out an annual canvass of the borough between 1 July and 1 December each year
- The canvass began on 1 August 2017 and concluded on 1 December 2017
- All households were sent a household enquiry form (HEF) to update the details for who is resident at the property
- All new names then have to complete an individual electoral registration form – online or by returning the paper form we send them
- Electoral services set targets for the HEF response rate, number of new electors and number of deletions from the register
- We used data mining to improve the completeness and accuracy of the register
- We made use of new software and technological advances to improve the efficiency of the service

Introduction

- Electoral services and the ERO believe the canvass was a success
- Just under 90% of households returned their HEF – up by 15% from 2016
- Achieved our target of 10,000 new additions
- We also achieved the target of 25,000 deletions – bear in mind the register becomes inflated throughout the year as the majority of additions do not provide a previous address and so do not come off the register until the canvass
- We trialled using mobile tablets for canvassing in 20 areas. Overall this was a success and we learned how we can use these to improve the speed and results of the canvass
- Data mining helped identify an extra 5,000 people who were on other council records but not the register. Further work identified that the electoral register was often more current and reliable than the other data sources
- The register is now in a very good place for the start of an important year – the mayoral and council elections are only 6 months away

Statistics (as of 28.11.17)

- Total electorate = 199,030
- HEF response rate = 87.22%
- Total additions = 9,875
- Total deletions = 17,346
- Total amendments = 1,609
- Final details to be published on 1 December with a polling district, ward and constituency breakdown

Costs

- Breakdown of costs (not exact figures)

Post	£65,000	Outgoing and incoming
Printing	£25,000	HEFs, ITRs, postal application etc
Software	£13,710	Mobile canvassing tablets
Data mining	£6,000	Analysing data and compiling reports
Online HEF responses	£10,000	website and software for online responses
Canvassers	£45,000	Reduction in staffing costs of £40k

- Data mining bought about approximately £25k of savings – bought about due to matching properties and names instead of printing and posting additional reminder forms
- A higher HEF response rate reduced the canvasser costs from £85k to £40k
- Changes to team performance removed need for additional temporary staff saving even more money
- Overall performance has improved whilst costs have significantly decreased

Data mining

- We gathered data from housing association partners, including Lewisham Homes, and other sources such as council tax, housing, benefits, parking etc
- These data sets were compared with the electoral register
- A complicated algorithm matched properties on household size and names. It identified properties we no longer needed to chase, enabling savings for printing and postage
- Data mining also identified thousands of names not on the register. We then followed a process to identify which of these are potential electors and others who had moved or were otherwise not eligible
- The process helps analyse the accuracy and completeness of the register, and identifies potential leads to follow up

Conclusions

- We would like the Election Committee to note the success of the 2017 annual canvass
- Electoral Services and the Election Committee should consider what further work needs to be done to maximise registration prior to the elections in May 2018