

MINUTES OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

27 June 2019 at 6pm

Present: Councillor Gibbons, Councillor Paschoud, Councillor Moore, Councillor Johnston-Franklin, Councillor Rathbone and Councillor Penfold

1. Election of Chair and Vice- Chair

Councillor Gibbons was elected as Chair and Councillor Paschoud was nominated a Vice Chair for the Municipal year 2019/2020

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared

4. Reports to the Election Committee

On Thursday 2 May 2019 by-elections were held in Evelyn and Whitefoot Wards to elect 2 new Councillors. The by-elections were a success. The Officer detailed that. Registration was low – only 250 new names were added to the register for the by-elections. Poll cards and postal votes were sent out early. Emails were sent to all electors which received a positive response. The new polling station at Haskins Hall was a risk – it was the third venue for this district in three elections – but the feedback had been positive and it's an improvement on the previous two venues. The counts took place in the Civic Suite and were particularly quick – counting staff were excellent and a tried and tested plan ensured it was efficient, transparent and accurate. This was a good test of our by-elections plan and we believed we performed extremely well in challenging circumstances

The European Parliamentary elections were held on Thursday 23 May 2019. Particular challenges for Lewisham included the short timetable caused by the late notice of the Government to confirm we would contest the elections, and the additional responsibility on Janet Senior as the Regional Returning Officer for London.

Electoral Services will be undertaking a review of Lewisham's polling places and polling districts during the next few months. Appendix E provided details of the scope and objectives of this review, and how Councillors can contribute. It is a legal requirement to complete a review of our polling districts and places by 31 January 2020. The Officer stated it is the intention to submit this in time for the 1 December publication of the new register. The timetable will allow for the final proposals to be put to Full Council for approval in November.

The Committee will receive an update on Lewisham's Local Government Boundary Review. Appendix F provided detail on what has happened in Stage 1 and what we can expect from Stage 2 when the Council and others will be required to submit proposals for new Ward boundaries in Lewisham

The second stage follows a process for determining:

- Ward boundaries
- Numbers of Councillors per Ward
- Names of Wards

The Council, local parties, community groups and individuals will be encouraged to submit representations during an initial consultation period. The representations should include details of proposed boundaries and reasoning behind them – for example; natural boundaries, community links, town centres, transport links, etc. The Council is to make a representation via a group of Councillors and officers similar to stage 1

The LGBC will collate all representations and publish some proposals. They will seek feedback on their proposals during a second consultation period. Once the second consultation period has finished the LGBC will review all submissions and make a final decision on the boundaries. They will publish their final proposals towards the end of 2020. These are then confirmed by an Act of Parliament and will come into force during our next Council elections in 2022. A more detailed timeline will be provided to all councillors once the decision of the LGBC is received.

The Committee received a report on the plans for the 2019 electoral registration canvass. The report was noted.