

Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York

5 September 2012

Police and Crime Commissioner elections

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Chief Executives' Group on the arrangements for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections to be held on 15 November 2012

2 Background

- 2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act came into force on 15 September 2011. This Act introduced elected Police and Crime Commissioners for each of the Police Authority areas outside of London and re-defined the way the Police Authorities operate.
- 2.2 Under this Act, each Police and Crime Commissioner will be elected for a four year term, with the first elections held in November 2012. Subsequent elections will occur every fourth year on the first Thursday in May, in line with local and parliamentary elections.
- 2.3 On 25 July The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections Order 2012 was laid and assumptions for funding issued to all Police Area Returning Officers (PAROs) and Local Returning Officers (LROs) with comments to be submitted by 10 August.

3 Electoral Commission guidance and performance standards

- 3.1 The Electoral Commission has now issued the bulk of their guidance for LROs and PAROs. All guidance is available from their website:
www.electoralcommission.org.uk
- 3.2 Their guidance includes the administering of the poll, absent voting, the adjudicating of doubtful votes and the verifying and counting of votes
- 3.3 It is expected that unless otherwise directed by the PARO, all Electoral Commission Guidance should be followed by LROs in regards to all aspects of the running of the Poll.
- 3.4 As with previous elections and the referendum, the Electoral Commission is undertaking the monitoring of LROs' and PAROs' arrangements. The first stage of the information gathering of project plans and risk assessments was undertaken in July.
- 3.5 Further information on LROs' and PAROs' arrangements will be requested at regular intervals during the election period.

4 Nomination of candidates

- 4.1 The nomination period for candidates begins with the publication of the notice of election on Monday 8 October and ends on 19 October at noon.
- 4.2 Currently only two political parties have declared their preferred candidates; the Conservative Party has listed Julie Mulligan and the Labour Party has listed Ruth

Potter. No known Independent candidates have declared their intention to stand at the time of this briefing.

- 4.3 Nomination forms can be downloaded from both the Electoral Commission website or City of York Council's website. Candidates will have to deliver their nomination papers in person to the PARO at the designated location.
- 4.4 The PARO will issue a copy of the Register of Electors for all eight local authorities to those candidates who request one to assist with the completion of the nomination papers. Candidates may have one copy in either paper format or data format.
- 4.5 Candidates may only request their copy of the Register of Electors on or after 8 October.
- 4.6 For copies of postal and proxy voter lists, candidates will contact each Electoral Registration Officer separately. Unlike the Register of Electors, the candidate can request postal and proxy voter lists any number of times during the election timetable.
- 4.7 A briefing session for candidates and agents will be held towards the end of September, to explain in detail the nomination process, the election process and the arrangements for the counting of votes.

5 Local Returning Officer and Police Area Returning Officer insurance

- 5.1 The Home Office will be indemnifying all returning officers against liabilities resulting from their duties. A parliamentary minute to that effect was laid on 17 July and it is expected that the Home Office will set this out in writing to each LRO in the near future.

6 Count arrangements

- 6.1 A count model for the reporting of the result of each stage of the counting process is currently under development. This will be shared with all LROs as a draft document towards the end of September.
- 6.2 Consideration has been given to the staggered starting of each stage of the counting process, based on the electorate size of the counting area. The largest counting area will begin first. This should ensure that the smaller counting areas are not waiting for long period of times after they finish for the larger counting areas to finish.
- 6.3 Attached is the draft timetable (Appendix 1), which is intended to have each counting area finishing each stage of the count at or around the same time.
- 6.4 The initial intention for the reporting for each stage of the counting process is that a template will be provided to each LRO to be completed. (Draft template attached at Appendix 2)
- 6.5 The template will be emailed to the PARO at the venue used as results centre and a follow up phone call to the result team will confirm the result emailed. Each LRO will have a designated member of the result team allocated, who will be available throughout day.
- 6.6 All communication from the PARO to the LROs on results at each stage will be by email and followed up by telephone call by the results team.
- 6.7 If the first stage has one candidate who receives 50% of the total votes and is the outright winner, a copy of the Declaration of Result will be emailed to the LRO.

- 6.8 If a second stage count is required, the email will include the direction as to which two candidates will have second preference votes counted.
- 6.9 The venue for the result centre is still under consideration. It is expected to be either the Mansion House and Guildhall or a city centre hotel.

7. Training for doubtful votes and key staff

- 7.1 The Electoral Commission has issued its guidance for the adjudication of doubtful votes. This is the standard of adjudication for doubtful votes the PARO will adopt.
- 7.2 To ensure consistent adjudication in each counting area, a training session will be held for LROs and Deputy LROs on the doubtful votes. A date in October will be identified to run a short session based on the Electoral Commission guidance.
- 7.3 Three dates have been identified for the training of key staff and table supervisors. The PARO will provide training on the supplementary voting system for any number of key staff and table supervisors.
- 7.4 The sessions will be held on the afternoon of 22 October, the morning of 23 October and the afternoon of 23 October. All sessions will be held in The Guildhall, York.
- 7.5 These training sessions will provide an actual exercise of all the count stages, to allow key staff to experience the counting system and the expected volume of doubtful votes at each stage
- 7.6 A training session for LROs on doubtful votes has been arranged by West Yorkshire's PARO on 20 September in Wakefield. The training will be on doubtful votes and will be presented by the Association of Electoral Administrators.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 To note the contents of the report
- 8.2 To identify a date in October for LROs to meet with the PARO for training on doubtful votes

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Draft start of counting times
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Draft templates for reporting results

Andrew Flecknor
Electoral Services Manager
City of York Council
The Guildhall
York
YO1 9QN
01904 552032
andrew.flecknor@york.gov.uk

23 August 2012