

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: TUESDAY, 15 MAY 2012

REPORT BY: RETURNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 3RD MAY 2012

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To report formally to the County Council on the results of the whole Council elections held on 3rd May.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The planning and management of the elections is a major undertaking for a Council. Election management is highly procedural, involves a large volume of work in a short and pressurised timescale, and has to be done with precision and accuracy. The 2012 combined County Council and Town and Community Councils were managed effectively and to a high standard. Many agents and candidates have been appreciative and complimentary of the efficiency and professionalism in which the elections and the elections count were conducted as always, there is some learning and improvements will be made for the management of the elections and count for the next Council elections in 2016 or 2017. I would like to express my appreciation of the dedication and professionalism of the electoral and count management teams and for the co-operation of all involved in the elections process including the many local organisations who made their premises available as polling stations.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Returning Officer Observations on the Elections

As Returning Officer the observations I would make are set out below:

- The elections team made available briefing packs for prospective candidates, nominated candidates, political parties and agents and provided advice both through dedicated telephone helplines and face to face. Communications of this type were generally effective and will be continued for future elections. National elections materials produced by organisations including the Electoral Commission and the Welsh Local Government Association were included and the Electoral Commission's key publications and website were

signposted as the definitive source of clarification on electoral regulations for candidates and agents;

- based on feedback at the 2008 elections we revised our guidance to allow tellers to request voter's electorate numbers either on the way in or way out of a polling station. This change in practice was well received;
- there were a number of complaints between candidates and parties of possible breaches of the Electoral Regulations on Imprints, alleged falsifications of nomination forms, defamation and published material which might incite racial hatred (there was some unprompted press coverage of the complaints). A number of complaints have been referred to the police as required under the Regulations and are under investigation with the involvement of the Crown Prosecution Service. Complainants will be advised of the outcomes of their complaints in due course, most complaints were resolved amicably through advice and mediation;
- in Deeside College we had a new count venue which was suitable for the purpose;
- the election budget has been subsidised by a revenue built up by agreement from previous elections funded by National Governments. This subsidy represents a valuable efficiency.
- the Electoral Commission will be reviewing the performance of the elections across Wales and England and will produce a national review report. Flintshire will also complete a self-assessment against the national performance indicators which will be published.

3.02 Election Results

The details of the votes cast for each candidate and the outcome of the election for each electoral division are set out in Appendix 1 of the report in alphabetical order of electoral division. The overall turnout for the election was 36.79% of the electorate. Approximately 16,000 postal votes were issued and approximately 10,500 returned. 48 divisions were contested with 9 uncontested.

3.03 Political Balance

The political balance of the council, according to the affiliations of the elected candidates as disclosed on their nomination papers for the election, is as follows:

Conservative	8
Independent	19

Labour	31
Liberal Democrat	7
Plaid Cymru	1
Other	4

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 The report is noted.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Election results

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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