
ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS TO THE SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL ON 4 MAY 2017

Report by Returning Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

18 MAY 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives details of those persons elected to serve as Members of the Scottish Borders Council, along with other aspects of the election.**
- 1.2 The election for Councillors to Scottish Borders Council took place on 4 May 2017, with the electronic count following on 5 May 2017. There were 110 polling places containing 151 polling stations staffed by 310 Presiding Officer and Poll Clerks, with all staff receiving training on their roles.
- 1.3 Over 90,000 ballot papers were printed, with 13,344 postal ballot packs issued, to ensure that the 91,060 electors in the Scottish Borders were able to cast their votes. Postal votes were returned to Council Headquarters prior to polling day where the postal voting statements were verified and ballot papers put forward to the Count at Springwood Park. The electronic count at Springwood Park, Kelso involved registering and verifying ballot box contents, scanning ballot papers, first level adjudication and Returning Officer adjudication, before the results were collated and announced. The Count proceeded smoothly, with only a minor delay.
- 1.4 The Council website and social media were updated regularly both in the run up to the election, on polling day, and during the count. The Council's Communications Team provided regular short video clips and photographs of key moments of the Count using YouTube and Flickr.
- 1.5 The 34 Councillors elected are detailed in Section 4 of this report. As Returning Officer, I consider the management of the election to be a success.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Council notes the details of those individuals elected on 4 May 2017 to serve as Members of the Scottish Borders Council for the period to the next Local Government Election in 2022.**

3 THE ELECTION

- 3.1 In preparation for the Local Government Election 2017, as Returning Officer, I appointed 4 Depute Returning Officers and an Election Project Planning Team. This Planning Team met on 10 occasions from September 2016, working to a Project Plan and Risk Register, to ensure all aspects of managing an election were taken into account and progressed accordingly.
- 3.2 There were 110 polling places containing 151 polling stations staffed by 310 Presiding Officer and Poll Clerks. All staff received training on their roles, including the completion of a multiple choice questionnaire and a ballot paper account exercise, both of which were marked and returned to them, with comments where appropriate. All Polling Stations were visited by Polling Station Inspectors to ensure that the polling process ran efficiently. Only a few minor issues were reported which were all dealt with at the time.
- 3.3 Over 90,000 ballot papers were printed, with 13,344 postal ballot packs issued, to ensure that the 91,060 electors in the Scottish Borders were able to cast their votes. Postal votes were returned to Council Headquarters prior to polling day where the postal voting statements were verified and ballot papers put forward to the Count at Springwood Park. Over 300 postal votes were handed in to polling stations which required verification on the Thursday night at Springwood Park prior to the Count on Friday 5 May. The process for verifying postal votes is quite time consuming so it is always preferable that postal votes are sent back as early as possible so that the Count is not delayed unduly.
- 3.4 The Count took place on Friday 5 May at Springwood Park, Kelso, starting at 9.00 a.m. Almost 90 staff were in attendance to carry out the electronic count which involved registering and verifying ballot box contents, scanning ballot papers, first level adjudication and Returning Officer adjudication, before the results were collated and announced. Starting with Ward 1 (Tweeddale West), ballot boxes were processed in Ward order and results announced individually. The Count proceeded smoothly, with only a minor delay when a number from a ballot paper account had been inadvertently entered incorrectly into the system and technical advice was required from central support to amend this.
- 3.5 The Council website and social media were updated regularly both in the run up to the election, on polling day, and during the count. The Council's Communications Team provided regular short video clips and photographs of key moments of the Count using YouTube and Flickr. Electoral Registration staff provided electors' data for poll cards and postal votes, printed Registers for the Polling Stations and sorted out any queries on polling day. Customer Services staff also handled election related calls before and on polling day.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1 The Count at Springwood Park, Kelso on Friday 5 May 2017 resulted in the following candidates being elected as Councillors:-

Ward 1 – Tweeddale West

- Heather Anderson (Scottish National Party)
- Kris Chapman (Scottish Liberal Democrats)
- Eric Small (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Ward 2 – Tweeddale East

- Shona Haslam (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)
- Stuart Bell (Scottish National Party)
- Robin Tatler (Independent)

Ward 3 – Galashiels and District

- Andy Anderson (Scottish National Party)
- Euan Jardine (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)
- Sandy Aitchison (Independent)
- Harry Scott (Independent)

Ward 4 – Selkirkshire

- Michelle Ballantyne (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Elaine Thornton-Nicol (Scottish National Party)
- Gordon Edgar (Independent)

Ward 5 – Leaderdale and Melrose

- David Parker (Independent)
- Tom Miers (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Kevin Drum (Scottish National Party)

Ward 6 – Mid Berwickshire

- John Greenwell (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Mark Rowley (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Donald Moffat (Scottish National Party)

Ward 7 – East Berwickshire

- Jim Fullarton (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Carol Hamilton (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Helen Laing (Scottish National Party)

Ward 8 – Kelso and District

- Simon Mountford (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Tom Weatherston (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Euan Robson (Scottish Liberal Democrats)

Ward 9 – Jedburgh and District

- Scott Hamilton (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Sandy Scott (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Jim Brown (Scottish National Party)

Ward 10 – Hawick and Denholm

- Stuart Marshall (Independent)
- Neil Richards (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Clair Ramage (Scottish National Party)

Ward 11 – Hawick and Hermitage

- Watson McAteer (Independent)
- George Turnbull (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)
- Davie Paterson (Independent)

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The costs of the election were funded by the election budget supported by government grant.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

A Project Plan and a Risk Register were prepared and maintained for the Election as part of the planning and implementation process. This was part of the requirement for the Returning Officer to meet the Electoral Commission's performance standards for Returning Officers.

5.3 Equalities

There were no adverse equality implications.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental effects of this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There is no impact on the Council's carbon emissions as a result of this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

All electors across the Borders were able to vote either at a polling station or through a postal or proxy vote. There were 110 polling places across the Borders covering both urban and rural areas.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Chief Officer HR have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Tracey Logan
Returning Officer

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jenny Wilkinson	Depute Returning Officer

Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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