

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6 JULY 2010**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**ELECTION 2010**

This year's election was one of the largest the Council has ever held with 2 parliamentary constituencies and 18 Borough wards. The election is a huge logistical event employing approximately 550 people in total on the day. Additionally the 2 constituencies were not coterminous with this Council's boundaries and involved significant areas of Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils which also had local elections in these areas.

Both myself and the Returning Officer was very pleased with the way the election operated but that does not mean improvements cannot be made and in our subsequent debrief a number of administrative improvements are being looked at. In relation to your specific issues I would comment as follows:-

Suitability and accessibility of Detling Showground for the Count

Detling does have a number of issues in terms of its use as an election count venue namely its location and the difficulties of accessing the site together with the barrenness of the facility itself. This year I felt the facility was much better in terms of the internal facility particularly concerns such as cold and lighting were dealt with effectively. Whilst the leisure centre has many advantages over it as a facility and as a location it was necessary to use Detling this year because of the sheer size of the count which could not have been accommodated at the leisure centre.

Parking and delivery of boxes

The parking arrangements were different this year but whilst working better with the use of 2 different accesses there were still a number of issues which caused me some concern. In future if we use this facility it will be necessary to look at where each group parks in the area and will have to allocate more staff to directing parking. The main concern as always is the access of the ballot boxes and this year this was better but there were concerns about the Presiding Officers parking and their access from there to the ballot box reception. I am looking at means of improving this situation by using count staff.

Refreshments

These were provided in the adjoining building for visitors and both food and drink was provided here. The staff had tea and coffee facilities.

In addition at future events at this location I would bring in a low level stage to make more of an impact at results time.