

# Shropshire Council's Guide for Candidates and Agents



# UK Parliamentary Elections 2024

North Shropshire Parliamentary Constituency Shrewsbury Parliamentary Constituency South Shropshire Parliamentary Constituency

May 2024

# **Table of Contents**

	PAGE
How to contact Shropshire Council	4
Useful Websites	5
Sample Notice of Election	6
Candidates' Deposits and Candidates' Expenses	7 - 8
Supporting Documents Available (including obtaining Application Forms for these Documents)	9 - 10
Notices of Time and Place for Local Key Dates	11 - 12
Postal Voting Overview	13 - 14
Postal Vote Opening Process – A Brief Summary	15 - 16
Electoral Commission's Guidance for Tellers	17
Posters and Flyposting	18
Protocol on use of Council Facilities by Political Parties/	19 - 20

# **Separate Documents**

- Return of Deposit Instruction Form
- Request for electoral register
- Request for a copy of the lists of postal and proxy voters
- Code of Conduct for Campaigners
- The Electoral Commission's Election Timetable
- The Electoral Commission's Nomination Pack and Forms

## **Link to Electoral Commission Website**

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-uk-parliamentary-general-elections-great-britain

# Forms available for after the Election

 Application Form for the Marked Polling Station Registers/Marked Absent Voter Lists

The marked copy of the Register and marked Absent Voters Lists is available to the following parties after the election has taken place:-

- The Electoral Commission
- Elected Representatives for electoral purposes only
- Local Constituency Parties
- Registered Political Parties
- Candidates who stood at the election
- Government Departments and Other Bodies
- Police Forces or other Security Agents

Application Forms for the Marked Register will be made available after the declaration of the result, duly costed with the prescribed fees.

# **How to Contact Shropshire Council**

## For Members of the Public

The following details can be passed on to members of the public who have any queries:

Office Address	Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.	
Telephone Number	0345 678 9015	
E-Mail Queries	Election queries	elections@shropshire.gov.uk
	Registration queries	registration@shropshire.gov.uk
Website	www.shropshire.gov.uk	

# **For Candidates and Agents Only**

Further contact details for the Elections team will be provided directly to nominated candidates and agents

#### **Electoral Commission:**

Electoral Commission	0333 103 1928	General: info@electoralcommission.org.uk
		Party Registration: partyreg@electoralcommission.org.uk
		Political Finance: <a href="mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk">pef@electoralcommission.org.uk</a>

# **USEFUL WEBSITES**

#### SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL:

https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/elections-and-electoral-registration/voting-and-elections/general-election-4-july-2024/

#### **REGISTER TO VOTE:**

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

#### **APPLY FOR A POSTAL VOTE:**

Apply to vote by post | Electoral Commission

#### APPLY FOR A PROXY VOTE:

Apply for a proxy vote - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

#### APPLY FOR A VOTER AUTHORITY CERTIFICATE:

Apply for photo ID to vote (called a 'Voter Authority Certificate') - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

#### **DIRECT GOV:**

http://www.direct.gov.uk

#### **ELECTORAL COMMISSION:**

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/ourquidance/candidate-oragent/search?quidance search%5B0%5D=election type%3A17

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter

Nominations | Electoral Commission

#### ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS

http://www.election-maps.co.uk/index.jsp

# **Sample Notice of Election**

(Note: Individual notices will be issued for each relevant constituency).

#### <u>UK Parliamentary Election for</u> North Shropshire / Shrewsbury / South Shropshire Constituency

- 1. An Election is to be held for a Member of Parliament to serve the said Constituency.
- 2. Nomination papers can be obtained from the office of the Acting Returning Officer, the Elections Office at Shropshire Council, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, during the times stated below.
- 3. Nomination papers must be delivered to the Acting Returning Officer at the Elections Office at Shropshire Council, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, on any day <u>after</u> the date of this notice, on Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, but no later than 4pm on Friday 07 June 2024.
- 4. The £500 deposit can be paid by legal tender or by means of a banker's draft from a drawer which carries on business as a banker in the United Kingdom.
- 5. If the election is contested, the poll will take place on THURSDAY 04 JULY 2024.
- 6. Applications to register to vote must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by 12 midnight on Tuesday 18 JUNE 2024.
- 7. New applications to vote by post, and amendments and cancellations of existing postal votes or postal proxy vote arrangements must reach the Electoral Registration Officer at Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND by **5 pm on WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2024**.
- Applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or an Anonymous Elector's
   Document valid for this election must reach the Electoral Registration Officer by
   5PM ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024. Applications for a Voter Authority
   Certificate can be made online: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate">https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate</a>
- 9. New applications to vote by proxy at this election must reach the Electoral Registration Officer at Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND by **5pm on WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024**.
- 10. Applications to vote by emergency proxy at this election must reach the Electoral Registration Officer at Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND by 5pm on Thursday 4 July 2024.

Dated: Monday 3 June 2024 Andy Begley
Acting Returning Officer

Printed and published by the Acting Returning Officer, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

#### CANDIDATES' DEPOSITS AND CANDIDATES' EXPENSES

### **Deposits**

In addition to the information contained in the following Notice, Candidates must receive at least 5% of the total of votes polled to be able to have their deposit returned after the election. Full details on deposits can be obtained in the Electoral Commission's "Guidance for Candidates and Agents"

Please note: Please complete and return the Return of Deposits Instruction Form

contained in your pack, to tell us who to make your cheque payable

to, and to what address you would like it to be sent.

#### **Election Expenses**

Comprehensive guidance on Election Expenses is contained in the Electoral Commission's "Guidance for Candidates and Agents"

Please note: It is neither the role nor responsibility of the Acting Returning Officer's

staff to provide guidance/advice on permitted expenditure and

expenses limits.

The Register Analysis figure is based on the last date for publication of the Notice of Election, which is Monday 3 June 2024. The Register Analysis figure can be provided on or after this date, and/or will be provided with any request for a copy of the Register of Electors.

## **Expenses Forms and Returns of Expenditure**

All Expenses Forms produced by the Electoral Commission can be downloaded from their website at:

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/uk-parliamentary-general-election-great-britain - Resources for Part 3: Spending and Donations

Should you require a paper copy of these documents, please email your request to: elections@shropshire.gov.uk

Expenses and the necessary Agent's and Candidate's Declarations shall be delivered to the Acting Returning Officer within 35 days after the day on which the result is declared.

Please note:

It is neither the role nor responsibility of the Acting Returning Officer's staff to provide guidance/advice on the completion of the returns and declarations. The submission of these forms is a legal requirement, and a record of all such returns and declarations are held by the Acting Returning Officer's staff for public inspection for a period of two years.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2024**

# NORTH SHROPSHIRE, SHREWSBURY & SOUTH SHROPSHIRE CONSTITUENCIES

# **DEPOSITS**

#### **DEPOSITS**

Rule 9 of the Parliamentary Election Rules requires that Candidates' Deposits are made during the period allowed for nominations, closing at 4.00 p.m. on **FRIDAY 07 JUNE 2024**.

#### The amount of the deposit is £500.

As we require funds to clear before the close of nominations, and as the period permitted for nominations is so short, we will only receive deposits in the form of Bankers' Drafts or legal tender (£1 coins or notes of greater denomination).

#### Bankers Drafts to be made payable to:

- Shropshire Council Parliamentary Elections North Shropshire
- Shropshire Council Parliamentary Elections Shrewsbury and Atcham\*
- Shropshire Council Parliamentary Elections Ludlow\*

#### \*Bank account names have not yet been updated to the new areas.

Rule 53 concerns the returns of deposits. We will return the deposits for those candidates that poll more than 5% of the total number of valid votes cast by the legal deadline of Monday 08 JULY 2024, by posting a cheque drawn upon the Acting Returning Officer's account to the candidate or to his personal representative notified to us in writing.

Forfeited deposits are sent to His Majesty.

Andy Begley Acting Returning Officer

# **Supporting Documents Available**

# **Parliamentary Elections 2024**

# Parliamentary Constituencies of North Shropshire, Shrewsbury & South Shropshire

#### **GENERAL OVERVIEW:**

The Representation of the People Acts makes provision for the Electoral Registration Officer or for the Acting Returning Officer to supply various documents or data to candidates and their agents in an election to support them in the conduct of their campaign.

The Political Parties are requested to be mindful that printed versions of the documents are lengthy – over **251,000 entries** on the electoral register and currently **32,936 entries** on the absent voters lists. Whilst you can request <u>either</u> a paper <u>or</u> data copy, please be mindful of the time and resources required to produce a paper copy, compared to a data version.

#### Obtaining the Documents or Data

The Register of Electors, Absent Voters List and the Marked Polling Station Register/Marked Absent Voter List are all available from Shropshire Council **upon written request**.

"Current" Absent Voters Lists are supplied upon receipt, with "Final" Lists produced immediately after the deadline for postal and/or proxy vote applications.

Application Forms for each of these items are provided on our website.

Completed Application Forms should be sent to Shropshire Council's Electoral Services Team:-

Tel: 01743 252330 E-mail: elections@shropshire.gov.uk

#### THE ELECTORAL REGISTER (Campaign Purposes):

The register of electors, for campaign purposes, can be supplied **upon receipt of a written request**.

The Electoral Register can only be supplied, at the earliest, on the last date allowed for the Notice of Election to be published.

Completed Form(s) should be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer at the Shirehall. The documents or data is supplied free of charge.

#### THE ABSENT VOTERS LISTS:

There are three types of absent voter, namely:-

Postal Voters, Proxy Voters and Postal Proxy Voters.

In the run up to an election, the list is constantly changing.

- The "Current List" is "as it stands at 9.00 am" on the day on which it is supplied.
- The "Final List" is as it stands after 5.00 pm on:

Wednesday 19 JUNE 2024 for postal votes; and Wednesday 26 JUNE 2024 for proxy votes.

Applications for the receipt of the Absent Voters List must be made **in writing**, specifying whether the "*Current*" and/or "*Final*" list is required.

Completed Form(s) should be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer at the Shirehall. The documents or data is supplied free of charge.

#### MARKED POLLING STATION REGISTERS - MARKED ABSENT VOTER LISTS:

After the poll has taken place, copies of the Marked Polling Station Register and Marked Absent Voter List can be requested. Please note that the Marked Polling Station Register can only be supplied as a paper copy, although we may issue this as a scanned document.

Whilst anyone can make an appointment to view the Marked Register/List, they can only be supplied to the following **upon receipt of a written request**:-

A Person Nominated to act for a Constituency Party	A Registered Political Party
A Member of Parliament	An Election Candidate

Applications for the receipt of the Marked Register/List must be made **in writing** and should be sent to the Electoral Registration Officer at the Shirehall.

Application Forms for the Marked Register will be made available after the declaration of the result, duly costed with the prescribed fees.

Fees for the supply of these documents are laid down in The Representation of the People (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and are £10 administration fee, plus £2.00 for each 1,000 entries or part thereof. Where the documents are to be supplied in data form only, the additional fee for the documents is £10 plus £1 per 1000 entries?

# **PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2024**

# NORTH SHROPSHIRE, SHREWSBURY AND SOUTH SHROPSHIRE CONSTITUENCIES

# Notices of Time and Place for Local Key Events Given to Agents and Candidates at the Election

Event	Notice Given in Accordance with	Time and Place	Number of Agents who may attend
Polling Agents	Schedule 1, Rule 30		Not more than one polling agent may be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.  Notice of appointment to be given to the Returning Officer by close of office on Thursday 27 JUNE 2024.  (Application Form in Nomination Pack)
Opening of the Postal Votes	Schedule 2, Rules 45, 56	Opening Sessions in the Shirehall, Shrewsbury: Commencing at 8.30am on the following days: Tuesday 25 JUNE Wednesday 26 JUNE Thursday 27 JUNE Friday 28 JUNE Monday 01 JULY Tuesday 02 JULY Wednesday 03 JULY Thursday 04 JULY (Openings may be cancelled at short notice if there are insufficient postal votes returned)	TWO agents* per candidate at any one opening  Notice of appointment to be given to the Acting Returning Officer before the opening.  (Application Form in Nomination Pack)
Opening of the Postal Votes cont		Count Venue: A final opening at Shrewsbury Sports Village commencing at 8.00pm on Thursday 04 JULY 2024.	

		Rejected postal votes from the preceding opening session will be available for Agents' objections to be registered:	
		<ul> <li>Daily at the Shirehall, on each working day at 4.00pm from Tuesday 24 JUNE 2024 to Thursday 04 JULY 2024 inclusive.</li> </ul>	
		<ul> <li>At the conclusion of the final opening session, at Shrewsbury Sports Village on Thursday 04 JULY 2024.</li> </ul>	
Counting of the Votes	Schedule 1, Rule 30	10.00 pm on Polling Day at Shrewsbury Sports Village	NUMBER OF AGENTS PERMITTED = 9 (Nine)*  Notice of appointment to be given to the Acting Returning Officer by close of office on Thursday 27 JUNE 2024.

# **COUNT VENUE:**

- North Shropshire Parliamentary Constituency:
- Shrewsbury Parliamentary Constituency:
- South Shropshire Parliamentary Constituency:

All constituencies will be counted at Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 4RQ.

**Andy Begley - Acting Returning Officer** 

<sup>\*</sup> Note: The number of Count Agents is in addition to the **Candidate**, his or her **Guest**, and appointed **Election Agent** who may attend any of these proceedings.

# **Postal Voting Overview**

Opening of the postal votes for all three constituencies will take place simultaneously at the following location.

Venue: Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

Dates	Times
Tuesday 25 JUNE	8.30am til 4.00pm
Wednesday 26 JUNE	8.30am til 4.00pm
Thursday 27 JUNE	8.30am til 4.00pm
Friday 28 JUNE	8.30am til 4.00pm
Monday 01 JULY	8.30am til 4.00pm
Tuesday 02 JULY	8.30am til 4.00pm
Wednesday 03 JULY	8.30am til 4.00pm
Thursday 04 JULY	8.30am til 4.00pm

Rejected postal votes will be available for agents' objections to be registered daily at 4.00pm on the above dates and at the conclusion of the final opening on 04 JULY 2024.

It is also planned to hold Opening Sessions on polling day at 8.00pm and at the close of poll at Shrewsbury Sports Village.

Entry to the opening of postal votes is restricted to Candidates and/or the persons appointed to attend the Postal Voting Sessions. A form for the appointment of such agents is contained in the Electoral Commission's Nomination Pack.

Please be aware that there will be three teams working at the Shirehall venue on this task; each team will deal with a parliamentary constituency at any one time. As at 28 May 2024, the absent voters in each Parliamentary Constituency was as follows: -

Parliamentary Constituency	Postal	Proxy	Postal Proxy
North Shropshire	9,905	34	11
Shrewsbury	11,327	35	20
South Shropshire	11,565	27	12

The figures are however changing daily.

The deadlines for receipt and amendment of postal and proxy applications are as follows: -

#### POSTAL VOTING DEADLINE: 5PM ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2024

- Deadline for new applications
- Deadline for new postal proxy applications
- Deadline for amendments to existing applications
- Cancellation of existing applications

## PROXY VOTING DEADLINE: 5PM ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024

- Deadline for new applications
- Deadline for amendments to existing applications
- Cancellation of existing applications

A person is not entitled to vote as a proxy on behalf of more than four electors, of which no more than two may be on behalf of other domestic electors (a domestic elector is one who is not an overseas or service voter).

# EMERGENCY PROXY VOTING DEADLINE: 5PM ON THURSDAY 04 JULY 2024

Emergency Proxies may be appointed if <u>after</u> the deadline for ordinary proxy applications you have a medical emergency, you are unable to attend a polling station because of work reasons, or the form of accepted photographic identification that you were intending to use to vote has been lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed, or has not yet been received if applied for recently.

# Postal Vote Opening Process – A Brief Summary

The Electoral Commission has produced a comprehensive guide on <u>postal</u> <u>voting for Candidates and Agents</u>

Reproduced below is the process adopted by Shropshire Council, for dealing with the returned postal vote packs. There will be three teams working at the Shirehall Venue on this task – and different stages of the process will be carried out at each table, as indicated below.

#### Stage 1 – First Table

- A bundle of 25 envelopes is collected from the relevant constituency box.
- The Postal Vote Statement and Envelope A's are extracted, and two piles are made, ensuring that the piles are kept in the same order, with the outer Envelope B's being disregarded.
- If a Postal Vote Statement or Envelope A (Ballot Paper) is missing, a
  docket is attached, and the items are placed in a basket to be dealt with
  later.
- A check is made to ensure that the ballot paper number at the top of the postal vote statement matches the number on the A envelope. If the numbers do not match, a docket is attached, and the items are placed in a basket to be dealt with later.
- For all successful applications, batch header sheets are attached to the Postal Vote Statements and Envelope A's that are being passed to the next stage of the process.

# Stage 2 – Second Table

- Each statement will be scanned to check that the date of birth and signature completed by the elector, are correct.
- If correct, the papers are clipped with the appropriate batch header sheets and forwarded to the next table, together with the corresponding batch of postal voting statements, for the next stage in the process.
- If a postal voting statement is found to be incorrect, the corresponding Envelope "A" is removed from the bundle and given to a runner to be dealt with separately. The remaining statements and ballot paper envelopes are then forwarded with amended batch headers, to Table 3.

#### Stage 3 – Third Table

 Ballot papers are extracted from the remaining Envelopes marked "A" and are kept FACE DOWN. A summary sheet of the number of ballot papers to be included in the count is completed.

## The Final Recording Process

- A record is kept of all rejected and provisionally rejected ballot papers/statements.
- The provisionally rejected ballot papers are retained for cross-reference purposes, as they may be able to be "matched" before the end of the Count.
- The rejected ballot papers (ie. those which have incorrect or missing personal data on the postal voting statements) are recorded and placed in a folder.
- The postal votes which have successfully been received and batched are placed in a ballot box to be included in the final count for the individual parliamentary constituencies.

## Attendance at Proceedings by Postal Vote Opening Agents

Rule 85A(3-4) requires that, when no match can be made, the postal voting statement is marked "rejected". Formally appointed agents may attend the opening of the postal votes and may see the rejected statements, as well as the personal identifiers record. If they object to the Acting Returning Officer's decision, they can ask for the rejection to be objected to.

The rejected ballot papers will be available for inspection after each opening session at 4.00pm on each day that such an opening takes place, with the exception of polling day, when a final inspection of that day's postal voting statements will take place at the conclusion of the Count.

No more than <u>two agents per candidate</u> may attend any opening session. Any person attending these sessions, will be asked to "sign in" upon arrival, and "sign out" upon departure.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR TELLERS AT ELECTIONS**

This is a summary of guidance issued by the Electoral Commission.

#### **TELLERS DOS AND DON'TS**

Tellers are usually volunteers for candidates. They stand outside polling stations or polling places and record the electoral number of electors who have voted. By identifying electors who have not voted and relaying this information to the candidate or their supporters, tellers play an important role in elections and referendums. The candidate or their supporters may then contact the voters who have not yet been to vote during polling day and encourage them to vote.

There should be no more than one teller at a polling station for each candidate at any time. Where a polling place contains more than one polling station with separate entrances, it may be appropriate for there to be tellers at each entrance, but no more than one per candidate.

Tellers have no legal status and voters have the right to refuse to give them any information. The Acting Returning Officer or their staff may provide further guidance on the activities of tellers.

#### **Tellers must:**

- (a) always remain outside the polling station
- (b) only enter the polling station to cast their own vote, to vote as a proxy or to accompany a disabled voter
- (c) always comply with the instructions of the Acting Returning Officer and Presiding Officer

#### Tellers must not:

- (a) be able to see or hear what is happening inside the polling station
- (b) impede, obstruct or intimidate voters on their way in or out of the polling station
- (c) demand any information relating to a voter's elector number, name or address
- (d) ask to see or check a voter's photographic ID
- (e) ask voters to re-enter the polling station to ascertain their elector number
- (f) have discussions with voters that may give rise to allegations of undue influence (e.g. voting intentions, party affiliations or party campaigns)
- (g) display any campaign material in support of or against any particular political party or candidate other than a rosette or badge

#### Tellers may:

- (a) approach voters for information in accordance with instructions from the Acting Returning Office and Presiding Officer
- (b) display a coloured rosette or badge displaying the name of the candidate, party and/or emblem or description; the rosette/badge should not bear a slogan and must not be oversized
- (c) remind electors as they approach the polling station that they need to provide photographic ID

# **POSTERS AND FLY-POSTING**

To display any advert on private land, you need permission from the site-owner.

The Council does <u>not</u> permit any posters on Council owned buildings, vehicles or street 'furniture' – this includes lamp posts.

#### SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

# PROTOCOL ON USE OF COUNCIL FACILITIES BY POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTION CANDIDATES

#### 1. Use of Council Facilities

- This Protocol has been prepared by the Acting Returning Officer for Shropshire Council and the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- The Protocol clarifies the legal position regarding the use of Council facilities premises, equipment and property and staff time for political purposes. In particular it provides guidance on handling requests to film or photograph Council services for use in any promotional material including leaflets and videos.
- The Protocol is based on Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 which prohibits a Local Authority from publishing any material designed to effect public support for a political party. This includes any communication in whatever form addressed to the public at large or a section of the public. The Local Authority is prohibited from giving financial or other assistance to a person for publication of such material.

#### 2. Use of Council Services for Publicity Purposes

- All requests from political parties (including all Members of the Council, MPs, MEPs, election candidates and their agents or representatives) which may involve the use of Council facilities and staff time must be made to the Chief Executive.
- All Council staff who receive such requests, must refer these immediately to the Chief Executive. No member of staff, other than the Chief Executive (or his authorised deputy), is permitted to agree such requests.
- Local Authorities are barred from assisting any Member, MP, candidate or agent in publishing publicity material. Council printing facilities must therefore not be used for the printing of political publicity.
- Filming or photography of Council Services which are publicly and freely available may be permitted, subject to certain conditions to prevent the filming or photography of members of staff and Council customers, and to avoid disruption to services. As a rule of thumb, the filming or photography of the <u>outside</u> of Council premises or facilities in a public space (e.g. on the street where the Council has no control over public access) is not a problem in principle. Filming <u>inside</u> Council premises or on Council land is not acceptable, as this would be in contravention of Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. <u>Any filming or photography, including the conditions to be applied, must still be agreed in advance by the Chief Executive.</u>
- If requests for photography or filming are granted, Council Services must continue to run as normal. In no circumstances will special provision be made.

#### 3. Websites

- Publicity material of a political nature will not be permitted on the Council's website or Intranet. Links to other websites containing political material will not be permitted.
- IT Services are responsible for ensuring that the Council's website is kept free of
  political publicity and that any links provided are to websites that are free of political
  material.

#### 4. Council-generated publicity

- The Council will be bound by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. The Code requires that particular care is taken when publicity is issued immediately prior to an election, to ensure that this could not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion, or to promote the public image of a particular candidate or group of candidates. Between the time of publication of a Notice of Election and Polling Day, proactive publicity will not be issued which deals with controversial issues or which reports views or policies in a way that identifies them with individual candidates or political parties.
- These constraints do not mean that there will be a blanket ban on all Council publicity during any pre-election period. Normal publicity generated by the Council via press releases issued by the Council will continue, with all press releases to be approved by the relevant Head of Service or Corporate Director. The Council will also continue to respond to media enquiries including those relating to issues of a controversial nature.

#### 5. Use of Council Property for Public Meetings

- There is provision within The Representation of the People Act 1983, for candidates in an election to have free use of certain rooms for holding public meetings. A candidate is entitled for the purpose of holding public meetings in furtherance of his/her candidature to use, free of charge, at reasonable times (up to the day before the poll), a suitable room in community, foundation and voluntary schools or other Council buildings (s.95 RPA 1983).
- The person using the room must pay the costs of preparing the room, heating, lighting
  and cleaning. Permitting use of these facilities will not breach this protocol provided
  the local authority does not publicise the meeting. This provision does not allow a
  candidate to hold surgery-type meetings or meetings of particular political groups.
- In accordance with this protocol, all such requests for public meetings within schools and other Council buildings must be reported in advance of the meeting to the Chief Executive. Prior permission does not need to be sought, subject to the provisions outlined above being followed.

This Protocol takes immediate effect and will remain in force until further notice.