

COUNCIL - 28 SEPTEMBER 2017

ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PILOTS 2018 - ID PROPOSALS

Summary

The Council, at its meeting on 20 July 2017, agreed to support the inclusion of Woking in the Government's ID pilot scheme for the 2018 elections, subject to confirmation of, and the Council's agreement to, the final proposals for the ID required to be produced in the polling station by electors.

Working with the Cabinet Office, Officers have developed a scheme and this report sets out details of the proposed ID requirements. It is proposed to have a photographic ID scheme with the provision for a locally produced electoral card, similar to the scheme currently operational in Northern Ireland.

The Council is asked to support the proposals to enable the Cabinet Office to draft the legislation required for Woking Borough Council to participate in the pilot. If the Council agrees the proposed approach, this will enable the Statutory Instrument to be created and laid before Parliament to authorise the pilot to proceed.

Reasons for Decision

To confirm Woking's participation in the ID pilot scheme and enable the Statutory Instrument for the Electoral Integrity ID Pilot in 2018 to be created.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That the Council agrees to be part of the 2018 Integrity Pilots subject to the ID requirements for electors being one of the following forms of photographic ID:

- UK Passport
- EU Passport
- Commonwealth Passport
- UK Photo Driving Licence
- EU Photo Driving Licence
- Older Person's Bus Pass
- Woking Electoral Card

The Council has authority to determine the recommendation above.

Background Papers:

Cabinet Office - Electoral Integrity Pilots - Prospectus
Sustainability Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the publication of Sir Eric Pickles' report 'Securing the Ballot' in 2016, the Government announced that it would look to trial measures to mitigate the risks identified by Sir Eric Pickles to the integrity of the electoral process.
- 1.2 In March 2017, the Cabinet Office published a prospectus for Electoral Integrity Pilots, which would test methods to reduce the risk of electoral fraud. The pilots will trial options for requiring electors to present proof of identity in order to cast their ballot in polling stations at the local elections in May 2018.
- 1.3 The objectives of the pilot scheme are to ensure that:
- the proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures are proportional to the policy objective of reducing the opportunity for electoral fraud
 - the proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures enhance public confidence in the security of the polling station.
- 1.4 Woking is still listed by the Electoral Commission as being 'at risk of electoral fraud', and given the history of allegations and instances of electoral fraud in the Borough, Officers expressed an interest in being included in the pilot.
- 1.5 The Council, at its meeting on 20 July 2017, agreed to support an application to participate in the scheme, subject to confirmation of, and the Council's agreement to, the final proposals for the ID required to be produced in the polling station by electors.

2.0 Pilot Scheme Requirements

- 2.1 All electors voting in person at a polling station or acting as a proxy for another elector will be required to provide ID before being issued with a ballot paper. If no ID can be presented, the electors will be refused a ballot paper and be unable to vote.
- 2.2 In discussion with the Cabinet Office, it is proposed that only photographic ID will be accepted at the polling station. The types of ID required will be similar to those used in Northern Ireland, where electors have been required to provide photographic ID since 2003.
- 2.3 Requiring electors to produce photographic ID will simplify the range of documents an elector can provide, reducing confusion on the part of electors as to what document is to be brought to the polling station. Additionally, it will also reduce the time taken to authenticate different ID by polling station, thereby reducing the potential for significant delays at polling stations.
- 2.4 Consideration has been given to the range of photographic ID to be accepted, balancing the availability of a type of ID with the level of confidence in the type of ID to be provided. Consideration was also given to those electors who do not have photographic ID. To this end, it is proposed to introduce a local electoral card, for which electors would need to apply prior to the election.
- 2.5 The full list of proposed acceptable ID is set out below:

ID Type	Comments
UK Passport	Need not be current, as long as there is sufficient likeness between the photo and the elector.
EU Passport	
Commonwealth Passport	

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UK Photo Driving Licence	
EU Photo Driving Licence	
Older Person's Bus Pass	
Local Electoral Card	To be issued by the Returning Officer.

- 2.6 The aim of the photographic ID is to establish whether there was sufficient likeness between the holder of the ID and the photograph on the ID. ID provided at the polling station can be out of date, or state the elector's previous address, provided that there is still a sufficient likeness between the photo and the voter.
- 2.7 In cases where the ID provided is out of date, the elector will still be issued with their ballot paper. Polling station staff will be asked to record this information for the Electoral Services team to follow up after the election.
- 2.8 All electors voting in person at a polling station or acting as a proxy for another elector will be required to provide ID before being issued with a ballot paper. If no ID can be presented, the electors will be refused a ballot paper and be unable to vote.

3.0 Local Electoral Card

- 3.1 Any elector who does not have the necessary ID will be able to apply for the local electoral card. Based on the 2011 census, it is estimated that around 10% of Woking residents do not have passports. (Figures relating to photo driver's licence are not yet available). This could potentially equate to around 7,500 electors not being able to provide photo ID, if they do not have a photo driver's licence or an older person's bus pass.
- 3.2 At this stage, the final requirements for the electoral card are being finalised. However, the proposed approach is set out below:

Application process

- 3.3 Electors will need to complete an application form, which sets out what supporting evidence will be required, prior to being issued with the electoral card. The supporting evidence required will match the evidence required for supporting registration applications:

Provide evidence from one or more of the following groups	
<p>Type One Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biometric residence permit • Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card 	<p>Provide ONE of these documents</p> <p>or:</p>
<p>Type Two Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Paper driving licence • Non EU photo driving licence • Birth certificate • Marriage/Civil partnership certificate • Adoption certificate • Firearms licence • Police bail sheet 	<p>Provide THREE of these documents</p> <p>AND</p> <p>ONE from Evidence Type 3</p> <p>If electors can only provide one of these documents they will also have to provide TWO Evidence Type 3 documents</p> <p>Or:</p>

<p>Type 3 Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortgage statement, not more than 12 months old • Bank/Building society statement, not more than 3 months old • Bank/Building society account opening letter, not more than 3 months old • Credit card statement, not more than 3 months old • Financial statement, for example pension or endowment, not more than 12 months old • Council tax statement, not more than 12 months old • Utility bill, not more than 3 months old • P45 or P60 statement, not more than 12 months old • Benefit statement , for example child benefit or pension, not more than 3 months old • Entitlement document from central/local government, government agency or local council, for example from DWP, Job Centre Plus, HMRC, not more than 3 months old 	<p>Provide FOUR of these documents OR complete the Attestation of Identity</p>
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3.4 Options for producing the electoral card are being investigated. It is likely that a similar approach to that used by the Taxi Licensing team for producing taxi driver licences will be adopted. This will enable electoral cards to be issued by post if electors are unable to attend the Civic Offices to be issued with a card, as long as the elector provides an attested photo with the application.

3.5 Electors will still be able to submit applications in person, but the facility to apply by post will make the process more accessible.

3.6 There will be no charge for the initial card or for a replacement card. However, this policy will be reviewed, in consultation with the Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel, if there are a significant number of cases where excessive replacements are required. If changes to this policy are proposed, Council approval will be sought.

Deadline for applications

3.7 As in Northern Ireland, it is proposed that there will be a deadline for applying for an electoral card. It is proposed that this will not be a statutory deadline, to enable the Returning Officer discretion to issue cards, if necessary, after this date. This is in line with the provisions in place in Northern Ireland, where the deadline is set two weeks before an election for the electoral card to be guaranteed.

4.0 Polling Station Process

4.1 Electors will provide their ID when they confirm their name and address on the register. It will not be a separate stage in the voting process; however an additional polling station staff member may be required to assist with the checking of the ID. As such, a bank of reserve staff will be maintained for polling day which can be deployed to polling stations if needed.

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- 4.2 Notices will be placed at the entrance to the polling station to remind electors to have their ID ready. If electors come without proper ID, they will be able to leave and return with the required ID before polls close.

5.0 Publicity

- 5.1 Officers are working with the Cabinet Office to plan a co-ordinated publicity campaign, which will start in the autumn of 2017. This will also be linked to the impact assessment to identify groups for targeted publicity.
- 5.2 The existing electoral publicity will be adapted to promote the ID required:

Publication	Comments
Confirmation Letters for new electors	When new electors are added to the register, the confirmation letter will set out the ID requirements and information about the electoral card.
Household Notification Letter and Elections Leaflet	This will be amended from a household letter to an individual letter to each elector. Accompanying the letter will be an amended elections leaflet, which will include details of the ID requirements and process for getting an electoral card if necessary.
Council Tax Billing	A flier regarding the ID requirements and process for getting an electoral card will be included
Woking Magazine	March 2017 – detailing the ID requirements and process for getting an electoral card if necessary.
Poll Cards	These will be amended to detail the ID requirements and the process for getting an electoral card if necessary.

- 5.3 It must be noted that this list is not complete and does not include additional targeted work.

6.0 Implications

Financial

- 6.1 There will be additional costs for administering the electoral card, as well as additional polling station staff costs. Confirmation from the Cabinet Office is still awaited regarding funding for these costs.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 6.2 Polling Station staff would require additional training when the ID requirements are finalised.

Community Safety

- 6.3 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 6.4 If the Council is part of the pilot programme, there is a risk that groups of electors may be disenfranchised if they will not provide proof of identity at the polling stations.
- 6.5 The impact assessment will identify groups who may be at risk of not being able to provide the required ID in a polling station, to enable communications and publicity to be targeted at these groups. This will ensure, as far as possible, that all electors have the ability to obtain the necessary ID.

Sustainability

- 6.6 As stated above, some electors may not currently have proof of identity. Using an electoral card that is verified on the same basis as electoral registration applications will enable electors to obtain appropriate ID and avoid them being disenfranchised.

Equalities

- 6.7 Work will need to be carried out to identify potential groups of electors who may be at risk of not being able to provide the required ID in a polling station, to ensure the alternative options are feasible, whilst ensuring the integrity of the pilot scheme.

7.0 Consultations

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder has been consulted on the proposals. The Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel are being consulted on these proposals and any representations will be tabled at the Council meeting.

REPORT ENDS

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The Council has a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation and this template enables you to consider the impact (positive or negative) a strategy, policy, project or service may have upon the protected groups.

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
Gender	Men					X	
	Women					X	
Gender Reassignment						X	
Race	White					X	
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups					X	
	Asian/Asian British					X	
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British					X	
	Gypsies / travellers					X	
	Other ethnic group					X	

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
Disability	Physical					X	
	Sensory					X	
	Learning Difficulties					X	
	Mental Health					X	
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual					X	
Age	Older people (50+)					X	
	Younger people (16 - 25)					X	
Religion or Belief	Faith Groups					X	
Pregnancy & maternity						X	
Marriage & Civil Partnership						X	
Socio-economic Background							Some electors may not be able to provide proof of identity. Work will be carried out to identify these groups and find solutions to ensure that they are not disenfranchised

The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The assessment is quick and straightforward to undertake but it is an important step to make sure that individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on people in Woking and take action to improve strategies, policies, services and projects, where appropriate. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

Sustainability Impact Assessment

Officers preparing a committee report are required to complete a Sustainability Impact Assessment. Sustainability is one of the Council's 'cross-cutting themes' and the Council has made a corporate commitment to address the social, economic and environmental effects of activities across Business Units. The purpose of this Impact Assessment is to record any positive or negative impacts this decision, project or programme is likely to have on each of the Council's Sustainability Themes. For assistance with completing the Impact Assessment, please refer to the instructions below. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

Theme (Potential impacts of the project)	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? (action)
Use of energy, water, minerals and materials			X	
Waste generation / sustainable waste management			X	
Pollution to air, land and water			X	
Factors that contribute to Climate Change			X	
Protection of and access to the natural environment			X	
Travel choices that do not rely on the car			X	
A strong, diverse and sustainable local economy			X	
Meet local needs locally			X	
Opportunities for education and information			X	
Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing			X	
Personal safety and reduced fear of crime			X	
Equality in health and good health			X	
Access to cultural and leisure facilities			X	
Social inclusion / engage and consult communities			X	
Equal opportunities for the whole community				Some electors may not be able to provide proof of identity. Work will be carried out to identify these groups and find solutions to ensure that they are not disenfranchised.
Contribute to Woking's pride of place			X	

