

REPORT FROM: CORPORATE DIRECTOR

TO: COUNCIL

DATE: 5th DECEMBER 2018

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FOR INFORMATION

ELECTORAL INTEGRITY PILOT

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To present for information an outline of the pilot to be carried out at the May 2019 elections.

1. At the last meeting the Council confirmed its willingness to take part in an Electoral Integrity pilot covering Photo ID at polling stations and also postal and proxy voting.
2. The reasons for agreeing to take part were to help shape the eventual form of the requirement for Voter ID and develop understanding on the part of the electorate ahead of national introduction; and to combat well documented concerns around postal and proxy voting.
3. Members will be aware from press publicity that the Council's participation has been approved. The pilot will be Borough wide and will apply to all the Borough and town and parish council elections taking place on 2nd May 2019. The Pendle pilot is the only one to cover both Photo ID and postal and proxy voting.
4. The Returning Officer is now engaged in discussions with the Cabinet Office and the ten other pilot councils on the detailed requirements. These will then be embodied in statutory Orders drawn up by the Cabinet Office to enable the pilots to take place.
5. The Cabinet Office will require an extensive public information and awareness campaign to be undertaken starting in January. A comprehensive plan is in preparation. This will include for example newspaper and radio features; posters on billboards, bus shelters and in appropriate locations; flyers with council tax bills and poll cards; bin wagon vinyls and lamp post banners; social media posts; and town and parish council briefings. There will be an emphasis on reaching hard to reach groups via relevant local organisations.
6. A detailed equality impact assessment of the pilot is being prepared.

7. The pilots will be evaluated by the Cabinet Office and the Electoral Commission at various stages and this will include commissioned market research. The evaluation will also require in depth data capture by the Council.
8. The Cabinet Office has given satisfactory assurances as to the funding it will provide to cover the public awareness campaign, additional staffing, additional training requirements etc.

Photo ID

9. The Cabinet Office is currently finalising the list of acceptable Photo ID to be produced by a voter or proxy voter at the polling station for all the pilots and it is likely to include:
 - a passport issued by a Commonwealth country or a country within the European Economic Area;
 - a photo card driving licence (including a provisional licence) issued in the United Kingdom or by a Crown Dependency, or by a member State of the European Union;
 - an electoral identity card issued under section 13C (electoral identity card: Northern Ireland) of the Representation of the People Act 1983;
 - a biometric immigration document issued in the United Kingdom in accordance with regulations made under section 5 of the UK Borders Act 2007;
 - an identity card issued in the European Economic Area which bears a photograph of the voter;
 - a PASS scheme card (national proof of age standards scheme);
 - a Ministry of Defence Identity card;
 - a Bus Pass issued by Lancashire County Council as part of the National 60+scheme;
 - a Disabled Person's Bus Pass issued by Lancashire County Council
 - a local electoral card.
10. A local electoral card will be provided on application to a registered elector who is unable to produce any of the Photo ID listed above. The application must be accompanied by an attested passport sized photograph and a declaration of the truth of the information provided together with two documents such as birth certificate, marriage certificate, non-photo driving licence, etc.
11. Where none of the specified documentation can be produced the Returning Officer will be able to accept an attestation on behalf of the voter signed by someone of good standing in the community.
12. Work is underway on devising arrangements for such applications to be made in person, by post and electronically and providing advice for electors on how to go about this.
13. There will be similar provision for cards for anonymous voters.

Postal voting

14. The postal vote pilot will (subject to final agreement of the detail with the Cabinet Office) comprise the following:
 - inclusion of a leaflet with the postal ballot papers providing information on electoral integrity and how to report concerns;
 - hand delivery of a selection of the postal ballot papers to voters and proxy voters; the voter will be asked to confirm that he/she applied for a postal vote and if they say they did not the ballot papers will be retained;
 - following issue of the postal ballot papers contacting a selection of voters to verify that they applied for a postal vote and that they have received them; where arising from this the

Returning Officer is satisfied that there has been electoral fraud the postal vote will be cancelled;

- following the start of opening of returned postal ballot papers, contacting a selection of voters to verify that the voter applied for a postal vote and that they personally completed them; where the Returning Officer is satisfied that there has been electoral fraud the postal vote will be cancelled;
15. A briefing meeting will be convened early in the New Year with political party agents on the requirements and practical implications of the pilot. It is important that candidates and other campaigners are familiar with the requirements so that they can advise electors properly during their canvassing activity.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	The Council's policy is to have fair and well run elections with electors provided with the necessary information when casting their votes.
Financial:	The Cabinet Office will provide additional funding to cover all aspects of the pilot.
Legal:	A Statutory Order will be made detailing the precise form and requirements of the pilot.
Risk Management:	None arising directly from the report
Health and Safety:	None arising directly from the report.
Sustainability:	None arising directly from the report.
Community Safety:	None arising directly from the report.
Equality and Diversity:	A full equality impact assessment of the pilot will be made.