

**Report for:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Monday 27 November 2023

**Title:** To provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details of the impact that the introduction of Voter ID has had on elections following its introduction in May 2023.

**Report authorised by :** Jess Crowe, Director for Culture, Strategy and Engagement

**Lead Officer:** Gareth Harrington, Head of Electoral Services,  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** N/A

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

To provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details of the impact that the introduction of Voter ID has had on elections, following its introduction in May 2023. This is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. Appendix 1 also sets out the work undertaken to mitigate the impact of Voter ID, and provides details of the additional work planned to further raise awareness of Voter registration and Voter ID.

Appendix 1 also sets out details of the additional legislative changes which have been implemented and those which are scheduled to be implemented in accordance with the Elections Act 2022 and other government legislation.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

N/A

**3. Recommendations**

That Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the work undertaken to date in the borough, to raise awareness about voter ID.

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the work planned to further raise awareness of voter registration and voter ID.

**4. Reasons for decision**

N/A

**5. Alternative options considered**

No alternative options have been considered. The Elections Act 2022 requires all UK voters to show an approved form of photo identification at Polling Stations. All councils are required to comply with the provisions in the Act.

## **6. Background information**

The requirement for voters to produce an accepted form of photo ID before being issued with a ballot paper in polling stations was introduced by the Elections Act 2022. This is one of a number of measures the government has introduced as part of its Electoral Integrity Programme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked that a report on the impact of voter ID be brought to the committee following the Hermitage and Gardens ward by-election in late June 2023. Two further by-elections were held in October 2023 (one each in South Tottenham and White Hart Lane wards).

These by-elections have allowed the Electoral Registration Officer / Returning Officer to further refine plans in advance of major elections in 2024.

2024 will see the borough-wide implementation of voter ID, along with other changes to elections and electoral registration. This includes the absent vote application process, overseas voting rights, changes to the franchise and candidacy rights of EU nationals and major parliamentary boundary changes.

## **8. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

Resident experience, participation and collaboration

## **9. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer, Equalities)**

### **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work to raise awareness of voter ID is funded by the Electoral Integrity New Burdens Grant that DLUHC have provided to Local Authorities to meet the cost of implementing the Elections Act 2022.

### **Procurement**

Strategic Procurement confirm there are no Procurement related matters arising from this report.

### **Legal**

The Elections Act 2022 introduced a number of measures which the government considers necessary to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process. Part 1 of the Act introduces a requirement for voters to show an approved form of photographic identification at Polling Stations.

## Equality

The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

## The Changes

As a result of the 2022 Elections Act Electoral Registration Officers, are required to ensure that voters are aware of the new requirements and can successfully cast their vote (along with the requirement to deliver a service to assess applications and issue Voter Authority Certificates to electors who apply for one).

To support the implementation locally, a full Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken to determine which sections of Haringey's residents would be most impacted by this legislative change.

As part of this assessment an analysis of the electorate within Haringey was undertaken by the Council's Strategy, Communication and Collaboration team.

Using research and analysis undertaken by external stakeholders including the UK Government, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Runnymede Trust along with data from the UK Census, it was possible to estimate the numbers of residents in Haringey who are potentially "at risk" of not possessing an accepted form of photo ID.

The analysis showed that those with disabilities, older people, people with lower qualifications, unemployed people, people who have not voted before, people on lower incomes, people who are unemployed, those renting from a local authority or housing association and those from Black and ethnic minority communities are less likely to possess an accepted form of photo ID.

This data was presented to the Elections Communications and Engagement Team (ECET). This sub-group of officers feeds into the Elections Programme Board (EPB) which is chaired by the Electoral Registration Officer / Returning Officer to provide strategic direction for the delivery of elections and electoral registration. Further details are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

ECET has ensured that the findings from the analysis presented to them is integrated into all activities it undertakes. The engagement plan, which is

currently being finalised, has a key objective of seeking to mitigate the impact of these changes on those communities which are disproportionately affected, particularly where any specific communities in Haringey are less likely to be targeted via other regional or national activities.

## 10. Appendices

Appendix One - The impact of the introduction of voter ID requirements on elections [insert link]

## 11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- Photographic ID Research – Headline Findings - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/609a5105d3bf7f2886e29f44/Photographic\\_ID\\_research-headline\\_findings\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/609a5105d3bf7f2886e29f44/Photographic_ID_research-headline_findings_report.pdf)
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation - <https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/government-must-not-disenfranchise-low-income-voters-polls>
- Runnymede Trust - <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/blog/voter-id-a-disproportionate-solution-to-an-invisible-problem>

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