



Haringey Council

Report for:	Corporate Committee	Item Number:	
Title:	Electoral Administration – Briefing on Developments		
Report Authorised by:	Kevin Crompton		
Lead Officer:	George Cooper		
Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: Non-key		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report seeks to bring members up to date on a number of developments in the field of electoral administration including the 2012 Mayoral /GLA Elections, Parliamentary Boundaries, a review of Polling Districts , and the legislative proposal for Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

2. Cabinet Member introduction

3. Recommendations

That the activities identified herein be noted and that any representations pertaining to the developments identified herein be conveyed to the elections office.

4. Other options considered

N/A

5. Background information



Mayor of London / GLA Elections 3 May 2012.

Preparations and planning are well-underway for these elections under the aegis of the Greater London Returning Officer, John Bennett. The Count is again to be an e-count on the day after polling, and in the case of the Enfield & Haringey and wider North-London areas will again take place at Alexandra Palace. Rob Leak and Kevin Crompton will be Constituency and Borough Returning Officers for the Enfield & Haringey Assembly Constituency and are working in partnership on local plans.

Parliamentary Boundary Review – Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.

Having originally published its proposals on 13th September, the Boundary Committee for England will shortly enter a second, brief phase of consultation (dates not confirmed but likely early in the new year) in which it publishes on its website any representations received on its initial proposals and invites any further comment thereon.) If published I hope to apprise the committee of any suggestions received, but of course the key constraint is that, under the terms of the new Act, all seats (except three) must comply with a requirement to be sized within 5%, electorally, of the average 76, 641 electors. Even though Haringey could still theoretically deserve two seats within its boundaries, as its seats were slightly larger than average, most London Constituencies will, under the proposals, cross Borough Boundaries in order to comply with the 5% threshold and Boroughs cannot be seen in isolation.

Polling District Review.

The Electoral Commission requires local arrangements to be made for periodic reviews of polling districts (as distinct from Wards) and after a long period of stability in these it would be timely to undertake this. Polling Districts are not fixed units of geography but are defined mainly by proximity to a polling place. I do not envisage any major change as existing polling stations seem to be working generally well but it may be worthwhile to look again at such issues as the mobile stations, which, are relatively expensive to operate. Public views will be sought and any views of the committee and elected members will clearly be welcome.

There is currently no requirement for a Ward review (the timetable for these is set nationally) and the Wards in Haringey remain remarkably well-balanced in terms of electoral size.

Individual Electoral Registration

A principle advanced by both the previous and present Governments, the idea would be that the autumn annual canvass of households – in which one person can effectively register fellow householders or family members giving little more than name and nationality – would be replaced by a system in which each individual



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would take responsibility for registration, albeit on a more voluntary basis, but with a higher standard of proof of identity, such as a National Insurance number (NINO) and date of birth.

Already in place in Northern Ireland, the system represented a transformation in the methodology of registration. Though not necessarily a bad thing in itself, the particular concern amongst London Administrators is that, unless heavily incentivised in new ways, registration could fall very sharply at least at first as it initially did in Northern Ireland. London requires considerable levels of doorstep canvassing to maintain accurate registers but it is felt that whilst it may be possible to obtain names on a doorstep, obtaining NINOs and dates of birth would be much more challenging. Nor is this likely to be a cost-saving measure overall.

Government has established an Electoral Registration Transformation Team (ERTT) within the Cabinet Office to produce the scheme and prepare the legislation and a number of London Borough Election Offices (including Haringey) have invited officers of that team to spend first-hand time at the front line of registration.

The draft scheme envisages a timetable in which 2013 sees the last canvass by current means but a “carry over” of names from an essentially hybrid canvass in 2014 to protect from any deleterious effects on the scheduled 2015 elections.

There is concern, however, that the full effects of more onerous registration requirements may not be worked out in time for the elections of the 2016-2020 particularly in the context of the more frequent Parliamentary Boundary Reviews.

However the final details emerge, the cost, data handling and above all accessibility implications of IER should not be underestimated. This will be a considerable focus of our work in electoral administration over the next several years.

6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

N/A at this stage

7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications

N/A at this stage

8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

N/A at this stage

9. Head of Procurement Comments



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N/A

10. Policy Implication

N/A

11. Use of Appendices

N/A

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Open Report.