

**REPORT OF
The Electoral Registration Officer**

TO
Electoral Matters Committee

ON
Wednesday 15 September 2021

TITLE: Introduction of Voter ID's

RECOMMENDATIONS: That consideration be given to the way in which Voter identification is introduced at Salford's Polling Stations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report provides an update and FAQ's on the introduction and benefits of producing ID at Salford Polling Stations. Voter identification bill is currently being passed through Parliament and updates will be provided as they happen.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: No

KEY DECISION: NO

DETAILS:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Elections Bill for 2021-22 is currently being passed through parliament and we are unsure of the date when voter ID will be implemented in the UK.
This report provides details of the proposals to introduce the use of Voter ID's at Polling Stations in the future.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The key information to note is as follows:

- 2.2 As a result of legislation, Voters will be required to show an approved form of photographic identification before collecting their ballot paper to vote at a polling station for UK parliamentary elections in Great Britain, at local elections in England, and at Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.
- 2.3 A broad range of documents will be accepted including passports, driving licences, various concessionary travel passes and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme. Identification must include a photograph. Any voter who does not have an approved form of identification will be able to apply for a free, local Voter Card from their local authority. We have no defined date when the new arrangements will come into effect, but we are looking ahead at ways to implement the issuing of cards to voters and the finer details such as costs and advertising.
- 2.4 We will be looking more closely into the training for polling station staff, the process to register and issues free voter cards and the way in which we will monitor costs to ensure recovery of funds.

3. What is voter identification and why is this policy being introduced?

- Voter identification will require voters to prove their identity by showing a form of photographic identification, before being given their ballot paper in a polling station across Great Britain at national and local elections in England.
- Government have argued that in our current electoral system, there is potential for someone to cast another person's vote at the polling station. All you need to do is say a name and address when you go to vote. Showing identification to prove who they are is something people do on a daily basis. It is a reasonable approach to extend this practice to voting and give the public confidence that their vote is theirs, and theirs alone. There have been no reported cases of electoral fraud or mis-identification in Salford for over 20 years.

4. Who will pay for the free Voter Cards, will local authorities have to find the funds?

- The Cabinet Office have stated they will cover costs of Voter Cards for local authorities. They will continue to work with us to consider implementation in a sensible way and the next steps, including implementation costs, will be set out in due course. We will keep this under review and work with finance to capture any costs incurred by Salford.

5. Campaign

As is the case before any election the public will receive a comprehensive communications campaign advertising the requirements in plenty of time and across a broad range of channels before the policy is implemented nationwide. Responsibility for this campaign will fall to Local Authorities as it stands at present with resources being directed through to us via the Electoral Commission.

6. Summary

Voters will be required to show an approved form of photographic identification before collecting their ballot paper to vote at a polling station for UK parliamentary elections in Great Britain, at local elections in England, and at Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.

- 6.1 A broad range of documents will be accepted including passports, driving licences, various concessionary travel passes and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme. Any voter who does not have an approved form of identification will be able to apply for a free, local Voter Card from their local authority.
- 6.2 In Northern Ireland voters have been required to produce personal identification before voting in polling stations since 1985, with photographic identification being required since 2003. The Electoral Commission have noted: 'Since the introduction of photo ID in Northern Ireland there have been no reported cases of impersonation. Voters' confidence that elections are well-run in Northern Ireland is consistently higher than in Great Britain, and there are virtually no allegations of electoral fraud at polling stations'.

Appendix 1- Accepted Documents in Polling Stations

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES: N/A

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

There are likely to be issues for people without photo ID such as the homeless. Other issues which have been identified are people wearing face coverings and religious headwear.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK: Low

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

HR IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS Supplied by: N/A

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED: N/A

CONTACT OFFICER: Sara Bennett **TEL NO:** 0161 793 3626

WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: All

Appendix 1

Forms of ID to be accepted in Polling Stations

There will be a wide range of photographic identification which will be acceptable.

These include:

- Various concessionary travel passes
- Ministry of Defence identity cards
- Photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme
- Driver's licenses
- Passports
- Free Voter Cards, provided by local authorities

Expired photographic identification will also be accepted if the photograph is of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder.

Legislation will also make clear that local authorities must provide a Voter Card free of charge where an elector does not have one of the approved forms of photo identification.