

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

ELECTORAL SERVICES

**Local Council Elections, 3 May 2018
Voter Identification Pilot**

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared by Carol Ling, Electoral Services Manager

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Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 provides that public bodies are under a duty to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- Foster good relations between different groups

This document considers equality impact in the context of the pilot to test options for requiring electors to present proof of their identity when casting their ballot in the polling stations at the Local Council Elections on 3 May 2018 (the Policy), assessing the likely impact on the following protected characteristics covered by the general equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

The Equalities Impact Assessment will help us to:

- Identify any inequalities in the Policy
- Improve the quality of the Policy
- Minimise the risk of exposure to claims of discrimination

Responsibility and Ownership:

Responsible department: Chief Executives, Corporate Services

Service area: Electoral Services

Lead Officer: Carol Ling, Electoral Services Manager, Deputy Local Returning Officer

The Policy:

This is a national scheme by the Government - to volunteer to participate in the pilots to test options for requiring electors to present proof of their identity when casting their ballot in the polling stations at the Local Council Elections on 3 May 2018 to make voting more secure.

Background:

Following the publication of Sir Eric Pickles report 'Securing the Ballot' in August 2016, the Government was asked *'to consider the options for electors to have to produce personal identification before voting at polling stations. There is no need to be over elaborate; measures should enhance public confidence and be proportional. A driving licence, passport or utility bills would not seem unreasonable to establish identity. The Government may wish to pilot different methods. But the present system is unsatisfactory; perfection must not get in the way of a practical solution'*

The Cabinet Office issued a prospectus inviting expressions of interest to run electoral pilots at Local Council Elections in May 2018 to test the use of ID in polling stations.

The Chief Executive/Returning Officer of the London Borough of Bromley and the Leader of the Councillor responded appropriately and Bromley along with three other local authorities (Woking, Gosport and Watford) will take part in Voter ID pilots at the Local Council elections in May 2018. We are currently working with the Cabinet Office to agree the form of ID that will be tested in Bromley.

There have been no specific allegations of any form of electoral fraud in Bromley. To this end Bromley is considered a low risk area and we have are happy to pilot voter ID at a 'light touch' level to include a large range of photographic and non photographic ID.

There will be extensive and targeted awareness raising campaign in Bromley to make sure every eligible elector knows that they need to bring ID to a polling station to vote. A detailed Campaign Plan is being finalised with the Cabinet Office. If the elector is unable to produce ID (or adequate ID) at the polling station, they will not be able to vote. They will be given a leaflet stating what the correct ID is and have the opportunity to return to the polling station by 10pm.

The Policy Objectives:

- To **enhance public confidence** in the way that the elections are run in the London Borough of Bromley, and **reduce any perception** of/opportunity for electoral fraud
- To test if the requirement to produce ID at the polling station, provides a barrier to voting and has a negative impact on **turnout**
- To ensure that all eligible electors in the London Borough of Bromley entitled to vote at the Local Council elections on 3 May 2018, **are aware** that on polling day they will be required to take (the appropriate) ID to the polling station so that they can cast their vote
- To **provide clear and accessible information** so that anyone who wants to vote, understands what they need to do
- To **encourage** all eligible voters to take the ID to the polling station on polling day

- To **minimise** the potential of voters being turned away from the polling station for presenting an incorrect form of ID
- To **work** with our partners to ensure that any hard to reach groups in the Borough are contacted

Partner organisations and any other departments involved in the delivery of the Policy:

- Cabinet Office
- Electoral Commission
- Association of Electoral Administrators
- Piloting local authorities (including Woking, Gosport, Slough and Watford)
- Supporting local authorities (including Tower Hamlets, Birmingham, Derby, Harrow and Peterborough)
- Communications Team (Bromley)
- Liberata - Customer Contact Centre (Bromley)
- Liberata - Bromley Knowledge Team (Bromley Council website)

Stakeholders concerned with/affected by the delivery of the Policy:

- Residents of the Borough
- Returning Officer
- Staff (Core electoral services and temporary staff including polling staff)
- Political Parties
- Prospective Candidates and Agents
- Royal Mail
- Suppliers including Printers and Electoral Management software
- Disability groups
- Older People's Associations

The Benefits:

- Enhances public confidence in the way that the elections are run
- Reduces any perception of/opportunity for electoral fraud
- Improves integrity of elections and 'openness and transparency'
- Provides opportunity to undertake extensive public awareness campaign
- Raises Bromley's profile in electoral environment

Constraints and developments concerned with the delivery of the Policy:

- The organisation and administration of elections is provided for in primary and secondary legislation
- The powers of the Returning Officer are prescribed and there is little latitude in the delivery of elections outside the legal provisions
- The details of the pilot schemes will be closely defined by the Cabinet Office and enabled in a Pilot Scheme Order
- The Electoral Commission will be required to complete a report evaluating the pilot schemes
- The Cabinet Office will also conduct an assessment of the pilot schemes
- There is no provision in electoral law for the Returning Officer to collect information about voters' ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation – what information has been provided on a national/regional basis has been gathered by opinion poll or survey organisations

Existing evidence on the impact of the Policy:

Between 1985 and 2002, voters in Northern Ireland were required to present one of a number of specified identity documents at the polling station. This list included a number of non – photographic ID documents.

However, the system was considered to be inadequate and to counter lack of public confidence in the electoral process (personation and electoral fraud were widely perceived to occur in Northern Ireland) the Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 was introduced which (alongside Individual Electoral Registration) strengthened the requirements in the voting process requiring photographic identification at polling stations.

For the first time, electors at the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections held in November 2003 had to present one of four forms of prescribed photographic ID with the Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card created for voters without an acceptable form of ID.

Reports indicated that 3,493 people turned up to vote without valid or current ID. Presiding Officers reported that no significant problems were encountered at polling stations. Overall the requirements were found to have improved public perception and Returning Officers also reported a marked reduction in suspected incidences of voting fraud – with no reported cases of personation.

There have now been at least 8 further elections in Northern Ireland since the introduction of photographic ID, with 99% of voters surveyed at the 2007 Northern Ireland Assembly elections indicating that they had experienced no difficulties with producing photographic ID. It appears that generally voters understand the requirement for photographic ID, but they do need to be consistently reminded to bring it with them on polling day. There is, however, little evidence of voters being turned away from the polling station for presenting an incorrect form of ID.

These are the first pilot schemes to be run in England to test the use of ID (both photographic and non photographic) at polling stations at the 2018 Local Council Elections. There are some concerns that the requirement to produce ID at a polling station may cause a decline in

turnout, as some groups will be less likely to hold certain forms of ID, for example the elderly (especially those living in long term care facilities). Additional provisions will be made to target hard to reach groups.

Demographic changes or trends:

- Bromley is the **largest** London borough
- Relatively **prosperous area** although some areas (in north east and north west of Borough) with higher levels of deprivation
- Large part of borough (in the south) mainly **rural**
- **Rising population**
- Increasing **older** population
- 13% of the population are **retired**
- Decrease in number of **0 to 4 year olds**
- **Married couple households** make up 34.4% of the total households
- **One-person households** represent 31.2% of all households
- 71.7% of homes are **owner occupied** (owned outright, owned with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership)
- Almost 31% of households have two or more **cars or vans**
- Large **gypsy and traveller** community
- Over 92% people living in borough **speak English**
- Over 83% people living in borough **born in England**
- 17% of the population is made up of **Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups**
- Over 60% people are **Christian religion**

The most up to date information about Bromley’s population from the Census 2011 can be found here:

http://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics_and_census_information/322/census/2

Also refer to our Public Engagement Strategy 2017/2018 for Electoral Registration (including Engagement Plan for Annual Canvass)

Assessment of Impact of the policy

Equality Characteristic	Explanation (including measures to reduce adverse impact)	Adverse Impact
Age	Only persons aged 18 years and over legally entitled to vote (although 16 & 17 year olds are entitled to register to vote in advance of their 18 th birthday).	

<p>(any group of people of a particular age, including younger and older people)</p>	<p>Young people/students i.e. the age 18-24 age group is traditionally under-registered and disengaged with democracy. However, this group are more likely to have photographic ID (passport or driving licence) as they are used to producing ID (to confirm age) for various daily life activities e.g. buying restricted products (such as alcohol), getting in to restricted premises (such as night clubs), buying travel tickets etc The inclusion of the provisional driving licence and PASS Scheme Card will also help these young electors</p> <p>Bromley has an aging population, with the highest number of aged 65 and over, than any London Borough. The proportion of older people (aged 65 and over) in the Borough is expected to increase gradually from 17.74% of the population in 2014 to 18.28% by 2024.</p> <p>Recent studies have shown that older people are less likely to have the appropriate ID (they may not hold passports and/or driving licences) and could be impacted by the pilot. The inclusion of the Oyster 60+London Pass and the Freedom Pass will help many over 60s in the borough. The Returning Officer also aims to make publically available plenty of information about the ID requirements through various access points for the elderly e.g. residential care homes, Help the Aged, Age Concern, doctors and dental surgeries, libraries, Citizens Advise Bureaus to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the pilot. The option to have an absent vote will also be promoted.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Disability</p> <p>(including people with a physical impairment, sensory impairment, learning disability, mental health problem or other condition which has an impact on their daily life)</p>	<p>2011 Census data shows that 84% of the resident population in Bromley are in very good or good health, 4% in very bad or bad health and the remaining population in fair health. The findings of the CIPFA Plus survey reveal that 2 in 10 respondents had one or more disabilities/conditions. The most commonly mentioned was mobility 8%, hearing 6%, mental health issues 4%, eyesight 3% , dexterity 3%, learning disability 2% and other 2%.</p> <p>Mobility - Although residents who are wheelchair bound or have walking disabilities may have difficulties accessing polling stations, the requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.</p> <p>Learning disability and mental health issues - People with these issues may have difficulties in understanding the processes and procedures around the production of ID at the polling station. However every effort will be made to ensure that those who request assistance and guidance on the ID requirements are given it (whether disabled or not).</p> <p>Visual impairment - Information will be made available in large print for those with poor eyesight.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>

	In all cases polling staff will be provided with comprehensive training in how to assist those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and visual impairment. The option of having an absent vote will also be promoted. Waivers can also be applied for where a consistent signature can no longer be provided.	
Gender Reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another)	Local Consultation data 2014 confirmed that 99% maintained the same gender identity as at birth, 1% preferred not to say. In the 2015 survey, 90% maintained yes, 1% no and 10% preferred not to say. All gender groups are treated in the same way. However, ID may be out of date and refer to the elector's previous gender due to gender reassignment. The Returning Officer will ensure that information is included in publicity and polling staff receive appropriate training to deal with such circumstances. We will also endeavour to identify and liaise with any local support groups in this regard.	Yes
Marriage and civil partnership	2011 Census data shows that 47% of Bromley residents are married, and 0.83% of Bromley residents are in a registered same sex civil partnership. All people of whatever marital and civil partnership groups are treated in the same way. However, ID may be out of date and refer to elector's pre-married/civil partnership surname. The inclusion of a marriage/partnership certificate should help. The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.	No
Pregnancy and maternity	ONS statistics show that there were 3,899 live births in Bromley in 2013. Polling staff are given training and guidance to consider the layout of the polling station (enabling access for prams/pushchairs) and making available seating. The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.	No
Race (refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality/citizenship, ethnic or national origins)	2011 Census data shows that 77.4% of Bromley residents give their ethnic origin as White British, with about 17% of residents being made up of Black and Minority ethnic (BME) groups. Bromley has a large Gypsy and Travellers community although this group is traditionally under-registered and disengaged with democracy. 94% of Bromley residents speak English. All racial groups are treated in the same way. Electors have to provide their nationality on registering to vote as this determines their franchise. Although there is the potential problem of language or interpretation being a barrier, there is no evidence to suggest that this has caused any problems to date.	No

	The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.	
<p>Religion or belief</p> <p>(Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief such as atheism)</p>	<p>2011 Census data shows that 60.7% of Bromley residents give their religion as Christian, 25.5% No religion, 2.5% Muslim, 1.6% Hindu, 0.5% Buddhist, 0.3% Jewish, 0.2% Sikh and 0.1% Agnostic</p> <p>People of all faiths and beliefs are treated in the same way. The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to most of these people.</p> <p>However, the Returning Officer will ensure that polling staff receive appropriate training to deal with ID requirements in regard to religious dress (e.g. face coverings).</p> <p>Also the Returning Officer will, so far as is practicable, endeavour to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint at least one female member of polling staff to every polling place • ensure there is a separate room/space available at every polling place so that voters are able to show their ID in private, if they so wish. NB where this is not available (e.g. the polling station is situated in a portacabin, polling staff will be advised to 'empty' the polling station for a short period at a quiet time, so that the ID can be checked (but the ballot paper must not be issued in private) 	No
<p>Gender (Sex)</p> <p>(A man or woman)</p>	<p>2011 Census data shows that 52% of Bromley residents are female and 48% are male.</p> <p>All gender groups are treated the same way. The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.</p>	No
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>(Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes)</p>	<p>From a Local Consultation in 2015 (sample of 1,837 respondents), 79% were heterosexual, 19% preferred not to say, 1% were gay, 1% were bisexual and 0% were lesbian.</p> <p>All people of whatever sexual orientation are treated the same way. The requirement to provide ID should not present any additional barriers to these people.</p>	No

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing arrangements:

We intend to monitor the implementation of Voter ID at the 2018 Local Council elections and to review whether it results in any unforeseen significant equality impact on different groups. This will be based on feedback from voters, election staff (polling staff and core team), candidates and agents, political parties, the Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office, together with data collected at the polling stations on the day.

Conclusions:

The main conclusion of this assessment in relation to the impact of participating in the pilot on protected groups and under-registered groups is that there do not appear to be any major issues, and that any potential impact on these groups can be addressed by the approaches proposed.

Completed by:

Name: Carol Ling, Electoral Services Manager, Deputy Local Returning Officer

Updated: 3 November 2017