



Cabinet Office

Electoral Integrity Pilots

Prospectus

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As detailed in the Government response to Sir Eric Pickles' review into electoral fraud, published last year, we are currently looking to trial measures aimed at mitigating risks to the integrity of our democratic processes. In particular we want to test options for requiring electors to present proof of their identity when casting their ballot.
- 1.2 We are inviting expressions of interest from local authorities in England, where Local Government elections are scheduled for May 2018, to run electoral pilots to test the use of ID in polling stations. Subject to the agreement of funding, the pilots will take place at those elections.
- 1.3 We also welcome any expressions of interest from local authorities who are not able to run a pilot at an election in May 2018, but would like to run activities which contribute to the evidence base. Our exact approach is yet to be finalised but this may include, for example, asking electors through a questionnaire or focus group event (after they have voted) what types of identification they hold.
- 1.4 If you are interested in participating in pilots or other activities, and would like to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact us. **We would like to hear of any expressions of interest by 24 March 2017.**
- 1.5 **By submitting an expression of interest, you are not committing to participate.** If you are unable to meet this deadline, you will still be able to submit a formal application to participate at a later date. The process and deadline for submitting formal applications will be outlined in subsequent communications.

Contact Information

For pilot scheme enquiries and expressions of interest, please contact:

Mark Hughes mark.hughes@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

or the Elections Projects mailbox, at:

elections.projects@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

PILOT OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The pilot schemes will seek to address a number of risks to the integrity of our electoral system identified in Eric Pickles' report, *Securing the Ballot*. The intent for 2018 electoral pilots is to test methods of mitigating the risk of electoral fraud and we are not looking for applications to pilot other innovations.
- 2.2 We are principally looking for local authorities to trial options for requiring electors to present proof of identity in order to cast their ballot in polling stations at the local elections in 2018.
- 2.3 The requirements for the nature of pilots and the detail of the systems and processes used will be closely defined by the Cabinet Office. Whilst local authorities are still able to raise suggestions that encompass innovations beyond what we are looking for, or which combine innovations in a manner that can provide useful learning, we are focusing on the specific areas that we wish to test.
- 2.4 In particular, our objectives are:
 - Objective 1:** That proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures are proportional to the policy objective of reducing the opportunity for electoral fraud.
 - Objective 2:** That the proposed 'ID at polling stations' policy measures enhance public confidence in the security of the electoral system.

PILOT DELIVERY

Policy Implementation

- 3.1 Our expectation is that, where the measures are piloted, all electors will be requested to present the ID as required. **When an elector is unable to present this ID, they will be refused a ballot paper and unable to vote.**
- 3.2 It will be important for participating authorities to develop an effective strategy for communicating the requirements to electors.

ID Requirements

- 3.3 The Government remains aware that not all types of identification are universally held by individuals who are eligible to vote in polls in the UK and it is important that we maintain the accessibility of the polls. At the same time, we must enhance voters' confidence in the system in which they are participating on polling day. The types of ID we are testing through these pilots will aim to balance these two requirements.
- 3.4 The types of ID that the Government is interested in testing are outlined below. These are indicative and are yet to be finalised. This will enable us to evaluate how effective different varieties of ID in different combinations are in meeting our objectives.

Photographic ID	Non-photographic ID
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Passport;● driver's licence; or● other nationally recognised photographic identification; or● a locally recognised form of photographic identification (e.g. a travel pass or library card).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Utility bill;● council tax bill;● bank or building society statement;● a letter confirming electoral registration;● a bank card containing a signature;● another suitable official document bearing a signature.

- 3.5 We are keen to explore the use of various forms of non-photographic ID that electors could present in pilots. Any non-photographic documents must effectively support the stated objectives of the pilot schemes, set out at paragraph 2.4 above. The Cabinet

Office will need to give careful consideration to these types of ID, in consultation with selected local authorities, during the planning phase of the pilots, to ensure that they offer an acceptable level of rigour.

- 3.6 Any elector unable to comply and produce the necessary identification should have another available option for proving their identity. We are also currently exploring the inclusion of a locally produced document that may be issued to an elector, for example, when the ERO has confirmed the elector's identity. We are not seeking to pilot the use of bespoke or purpose-made electoral identity cards or voters' biometric data as a means of proving identity.
- 3.7 More detail on the ID requirements, including whether ID documents need to be current or not, will be provided ahead of the formal application period.

Funding

- 3.8 Funding for the net additional costs of piloting will be provided by the Cabinet Office. If there are any savings that accrue from a change of process under a pilot, these should be used to offset the additional costs in order to ensure effective value for money in delivery of the elections overall.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 4.1 There will be a two-staged application process. We are firstly seeking expressions of interest by 24 March 2017. This will allow us to work with interested authorities to develop realistic research criteria and practical delivery plans. Once we have detailed research plans in place, we will seek formal applications.

Expressions of Interest

- 4.2 Local authorities who wish to pilot electoral innovations at local government elections in May 2018, or participate in another way, should express their interest in writing to Mark Hughes, Head of Elections Projects, at mark.hughes@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, by **24 March 2017**. You may also contact the Elections Projects mailbox, at elections.projects@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.
- 4.3 Those who do not submit an expression of interest will still be welcome to submit a formal application. However, early involvement will allow us to take on board your views when developing our research proposals. At this stage, no commitment to participation is required. Submitting an expression of interest does not guarantee selection; neither does it commit you to participation.

Formal Applications

- 4.4 There will be a requirement for a formal application. The application form will be available following initial discussions and we anticipate a submission deadline in June 2017. Authorities should only submit a formal application if they are committed to participating and if they meet criteria set out in the next section.
- 4.5 These formal applications will be evaluated and agreed by a panel (which will include representatives from the Electoral Commission and the AEA) set up by the Project Board. The decision to approve pilots rests with the Minister for the Constitution, who is obliged by law to consider any application from a local authority under section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. As part of the Minister's consideration, he will need to be satisfied that you meet the criteria outline in the next section.
- 4.6 We are very willing to share our learning and experience from previous pilots with you as you develop your proposals and we will work closely with successful areas in planning and delivering successful schemes.

CRITERIA FOR PILOTING AUTHORITIES

- 5.1 We are looking to take forward a small number of pilots in authorities representing a diverse range of relevant socio-economic and demographic conditions and different types of area (e.g. metropolitan, rural, urban).
- 5.2 If a number of authorities wish to combine to gain benefits around scale and exposure of a large electorate to innovations to provide more data for evaluation we are happy to discuss this.
- 5.3 We are also happy to discuss activity which could be geared towards further embedding innovations and examining their longer term benefits by piloting in May 2018 polls and in subsequent polls (which could include any relevant by-election). The approach to subsequent pilots may need revising to account for learning gained from initial pilots. This will be on the condition that subsequent piloting may not take place and may also depend on the overall picture for elections currently scheduled for 2019.
- 5.4 If you do not have scheduled polls in May 2018, we will be happy to discuss thoughts and proposals for how you might contribute to this work. Please contact Mark Hughes for an informal discussion.
- 5.5 Authorities should only submit an expression of interest or formal application for piloting if they meet, or expect to meet, the requirements outlined below.
- 5.6 Any local authority wishing to pilot requiring electors to produce ID at polling stations should:
 - have local elections scheduled for May 2018;
 - demonstrate there is local support for the pilot;
 - be able to demonstrate understanding of the Government's objectives for the project and how the pilot fits with these objectives;
 - be able to demonstrate the feasibility of delivering the pilot within the available time frame;
 - demonstrate that there are effective planning management arrangements in place and sufficient resources and capacity in the local authority to deliver the pilot, including availability of staff after the election to contribute to the evaluation process;
 - be able to demonstrate any management of service suppliers;
 - be able to demonstrate understanding of the contingencies you need to have in place – particularly to protect the security and integrity of the election;

- be able to present a clear and comprehensive communications plan covering all stakeholders;
- demonstrate the Electoral Commission's evaluation process (see paragraph 8.2 below for further details) will be fully supported;
- demonstrate the pilot has an effective business case and offers value for money;
- be able to demonstrate there is learning value to be gained from conducting the pilot and there is a clear means of testing the impact of the innovation;
- demonstrate that any innovation is at least as secure as conventional electoral practices; and
- demonstrate that the pilot will maintain public confidence in the electoral process, that key risks and issues have been identified, and that a plan has been drawn up for managing them.

PILOT LEGISLATION

Statutory Orders

- 6.1 Once the successful pilot scheme applications have been selected, Statutory Orders must be made for each of the pilot areas. These amend the current legislation and must reflect the exact nature of the innovation for the pilot to be legally compliant.
- 6.2 Experience has shown that the preparation of these Orders is time-consuming and requires intensive work from both local authorities and Cabinet Office officials. Relevant officers in the local authority will be expected to fully contribute in the process for the development of the Statutory Order.
- 6.3 Failure to prepare an Order in good time, which includes providing sufficient time for the Electoral Commission to carry out their statutory consideration of draft Orders, would mean that a pilot scheme cannot proceed.
- 6.4 It is intended that the Statutory Orders will be in place six months before polling day, in early October 2017. Any final amendments to the Orders must be made before the notice of election on 29 March 2018, but we would hope not to be in a position to have to make any amendments in the months running up to the polls.

Evaluation

- 6.5 Cabinet Office are committed to producing an evaluation of these pilots. More details on our ask of authorities will be made available ahead of the formal application period.
- 6.6 The Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to evaluate every electoral pilot scheme, and report its findings within three months of the election. The Commission's statutory evaluation and assessment criteria are outlined in section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. The Commission may also set a range of additional criteria, and it will publish its overall evaluation framework once applications have been approved.
- 6.7 The Commission will submit individual evaluation reports on each pilot scheme to the Minister for the Constitution and the local authority concerned. The Commission may also carry out an overarching analysis reviewing the 2018 pilot schemes collectively. This would be the basis for making recommendations and sharing lessons for future pilot schemes.
- 6.8 In order to enable full and effective evaluation of pilot schemes, local authorities and their suppliers will be required to provide the Commission with assistance during the preparation and delivery of the pilot scheme, including:

- access to data and information, including current and historic turnout data, project information and background information;
 - access to cost data to allow an assessment of value for money;
 - access to key project personnel; and
 - where appropriate, access to polling stations and the count.
- 6.9 The Commission recognises this is a significant undertaking for local authorities, and will seek to work alongside local authorities in evaluating pilot schemes.
- 6.10 In addition, organisations acting on behalf of the Commission may make some information requests of pilot authorities. As in previous pilots, it is likely that the Commission will undertake or contract others to undertake:
- an assessment of the accessibility of pilot schemes;
 - a review of the operation of any technical components of pilot schemes; and
 - public opinion research.

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

2017	
24 March	Deadline for Expressions of Interest
April - May	Discussions with prospective pilot areas Development of pilot plans
June	Period for submitting pilot scheme formal applications
July - August	Prospective pilot areas notified of decision
August - September	Meetings with successful pilot areas
June - July	Drafting of Statutory Orders
August - September	Consultation with Electoral Commission on Statutory Orders
October	Statutory Orders finalised and approved
2018	
September - March	Development and testing of pilot schemes
29 March	Last date for amendments to Orders (notice of election)
3 May	Pilot schemes run at local elections in England
May - August	Evaluation of pilots
August	Electoral Commission publishes statutory evaluation reports

THE ROLE OF PILOTS

Why Pilot

- 7.1 The Representation of the People Act 2000 makes provision for local authorities to submit proposals to pilot innovative electoral administration practices at local government elections.
- 7.2 Pilots provide a number of benefits for improving the way elections are run, including:
- the ability to test changes and innovations in a real world environment;
 - the facility for formal evaluation through undertaking testing in a controlled environment; and
 - the ability to ensure effective project management and delivery.
- 7.3 This allows us to make a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the impact of implementing new practices and determine whether they are successful in delivering the desired outcomes. We can then make an informed decision about which measures should be implemented.
- 7.4 Previous pilots have included innovations such as 100% checking of postal vote verifiers, which is now mandatory, and improves the security of the postal voting process. They have also served to test innovations, such as early-voting, that were not considered to enhance our democratic processes and have not been taken forward.

Strategic Vision

- 7.5 These electoral administration pilot schemes are an integral part of the wider Government agenda to deliver a clear and secure democracy. Sir Eric Pickles' review into electoral fraud has identified a number of areas in which processes could be improved to ensure the integrity of elections and reduce perceptions that those processes are being subverted. His research particularly highlighted the matter of voter ID requirements and argued the case that by not requiring proof of identity in polling stations, we exposed ourselves to the risk of personation.
- 7.6 Accordingly, the Government wishes to see in place systems that can mitigate risks to the integrity of our electoral processes and address the perception of voter fraud
- 7.7 Electoral processes must be accessible, to make sure that every person who is entitled to vote is able to exercise that right. They must also be robust so that we can ensure high levels of security and maintain high levels of confidence in the legitimacy of determinations. Through pilot schemes we can test whether new practices are in-keeping with these requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Legislation

- 8.1 The regulations providing for electoral administration pilots and governing how they operate are set out in The Representation of the People Act 2000, s 10, at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/2/section/10
- 8.2 The statutory criteria for the Electoral Commission's evaluation of the pilots are also set out in The Representation of the People Act 2000, s 10, subsections (6) to (10).

Reports

- 8.3 The following reports provide background on the issue of voter ID at polling stations and on the wider ongoing work on electoral integrity:

A Democracy that Works for Everyone: A Clear and Secure Democracy, Government Response to Sir Eric Pickles' Review of Electoral Fraud
www.gov.uk/government/.../a-democracy-that-works-for-everyone-a-clear-and-secure-democracy

Securing the Ballot, Report of Sir Eric Pickles' Review into Electoral Fraud
www.gov.uk/government/.../securing-the-ballot-review-into-electoral-fraud

Electoral Commission, Statement on Sir Eric Pickles' Review of Electoral Fraud
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/.../electoral-commission-statement-on-sir-eric-pickles-review-of-electoral-fraud

House of Commons Library, *Electoral Fraud since 2010 Research Briefing*
researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06255

- 8.4 You may also find the following information on the last set of electoral administration pilots useful in preparing your application:

Electoral Commission, *Key Issues and Conclusion, May 2007 Electoral Pilot Schemes*
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/.../Keyfindingsandrecommendationssummarypaper_27191-20111_ENSW.pdf

Electoral Commission/ICM, *Local Elections Pilot Schemes 2007, Main Research Report*
www.electoralcommission.org.uk/.../ICMElectoralPilotsresearchreport_27285-20161_ENSW.pdf

House of Commons Library, *Electoral Pilot Schemes Research Briefing*
researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN04397

FAQs

Q. Will electors who cannot produce ID in a polling station during a pilot still be allowed to vote?

- A. No. The aim of the pilots is to test, in a real world situation, the effect of the changes to the voting process.

Allowing voters who are not able to provide the requisite form of identification to vote would prejudice the validity of the results of the pilot schemes, and would be likely to prevent the Government from obtaining the information it needs in order to make the right decision about the suitability of voter identification measures to other elections in Great Britain.

As part of the pilots process, it will be important to ensure that all eligible electors have an opportunity to use or obtain ID that will enable them to participate, and for there to be public awareness of the need to present ID in areas where pilots are being run. However, to allow electors who cannot produce ID to still vote would undermine the validity of the pilots and the ability to assess impacts in this area.

This may be particularly the case given that social media now facilitates the quick and effective dispersal of information on a real-time basis, and electors who were still allowed to vote without ID, or those that witnessed them doing so, could share that information. This could lead to the pilot schemes being undermined.

Q. Can I apply to pilot if I am not holding elections in May 2018?

- A. No. We are only seeking applications from authorities who are scheduled to hold elections in May 2018. The purpose of the pilot schemes is to test the impact of voter identification measures on elections *in practice*. Only applications from authorities who are scheduled to hold elections where voter identification can actually be tested will be approved.

Q. Can I contribute to the development of pilot schemes if I'm not scheduled to hold an election?

- A. Yes. Although piloting applications will only be approved from authorities scheduled to hold an election in 2018, the Government is still interested in hearing from authorities that want to contribute, but which are not holding any polls in May 2018.

Although you will not be able to test voter identification measures in polling stations in practice, there may be other ways in which you could participate: for example, you may like to conduct information gathering exercises at polling stations in May 2018 or at subsequent by-elections to identify what types of identification are held by your authority's electors.

Cabinet Office officials will be keen to discuss the details of any such proposals with you.

Q. Will polling station staff require further training to participate in a pilot scheme, if my application is successful? Who will provide and fund the training?

- A. Yes, polling station staff will be required to receive further training to ensure that they are able to administer any piloted measures effectively.

Successful applicants will be expected to show, as part of their application, their plans for ensuring that presiding officers and polling station staff are able to effectively administer the measures of the pilot scheme on polling day. Staff need to be familiar with the types of identification that are acceptable under the terms of the authority's approved application, and should understand the importance of not issuing a ballot paper to any elector who cannot present a specified form of identification.

Any anticipated additional training costs for polling station staff should be set out in your application.

Q. Will I have the opportunity to meet with Cabinet Office officials to discuss my application?

- A. Yes. Cabinet Office officials will be keen to meet with you to discuss the detail of the proposed measures, as well as implementation plans.

Cabinet Office officials will be keen to work closely with and support you during the period to polling day in May 2018, to put together a detailed plan for implementing and running an effective pilot scheme. Cabinet Office officials will be available for further meetings and consultations throughout the duration of pilot scheme development and implementation.

Q. How will electors be notified of the ID requirements for polling day in May 2018, if my authority is selected?

- A. Each pilot scheme will need to include plans for notifying electors of the change of process being trialled, and how the effectiveness of those activities will be assessed. Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission colleagues will work with you on developing these plans.

Q. Will I or polling station staff be required to record any information during the pilot scheme, for evaluation purposes?

- A. Yes. It will be necessary for you to record information about the conduct of the pilot schemes, so that they can be effectively evaluated afterwards. Under statute, the Electoral Commission is required to evaluate and assess any pilot schemes, and to provide a report to Government and local authorities on the scheme's success. Local authorities who have run a pilot scheme are required to provide the Commission with assistance in preparing its evaluation and report. This may include making provisions to ascertain the views of voters about the pilot scheme during its operation.