



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

26 February 2018

6.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

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For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 16 February 2018

Committee Membership

Councillor D Walford (Chair)

Councillor M Watkin (Vice-Chair)

Councillors A Dychton, J Johnson, M Mills, N Shah and N Steele

Agenda

Part A - Open to the Public

- 1. Apologies for absence/ committee membership**
- 2. Disclosure of interests (if any)**
- 3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 07 November 2018 to be submitted and signed.

Copies of the minutes of this meeting are usually available seven working days following the meeting.

(All minutes are available on the Council's [website](#).)

- 4. Voter ID Pilot (Pages 3 - 55)**

A report of the Managing Director asking the committee to ratify his decision to request the Cabinet Office to participate in the Electoral Pilot for the May 2018 Mayoral and Borough Ward elections.

- 5. Setting the Council Tax for 2018/19 (Pages 56 - 59)**

A report of the Head of Finance asking the committee to formally set the final council tax for residents of Watford, which includes the precepts for Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, as set out in the report.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote will be taken for this item.

Part A

Report to: Functions Committee
Date of meeting: 26 February 2018
Report of: Managing Director
Title: Voter ID Pilot

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet Office offered all local authorities in Great Britain the opportunity to pilot voter identification (ID) in their May 2018 local elections to enable the Cabinet Office to identify the best way to implement voter ID nationally. Woking, Gosport, Bromley, Swindon and Watford have offered to pilot different forms of voter ID and are working closely with Cabinet Office to complete the design and development of successful voter ID pilots.
- 1.2 The Functions Committee has within its terms of reference the delegation to agree whether the Council should participate in an electoral pilot.
- 1.3 As the Cabinet office needed Watford’s decision last year in order to prepare the regulatory Order, the Managing Director consulted the Mayor and the Election Agents and made the decision to put forward the Council under urgency provisions.
- 1.4 This report seeks formal confirmation from the Functions Committee to proceed with the Pilot.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
ID pilot will disenfranchise voters	Democratic process will be impaired	Extensive publicity is underway to ensure all voters know	Tolerate	4

		the requirements . Watford's pilot is not restrictive as the poll card or any other approved ID is the only requirement.		
There may be a challenge to the pilot or election result	May generate legal process	Government has now made the regulatory Order which legally authorises the pilot.	Tolerate	4

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the committee ratifies the Managing Directors decision to request the Cabinet Office to participate in the Electoral Pilot for the May 2018 Mayoral and Borough Ward elections.

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 In March 2017, the Cabinet Office invited local authorities to participate in a pilot study this year to help reduce election fraud. The prospectus inviting interest in the pilots is attached at Appendix 1. The pilot schemes will seek to address a number of risks to the integrity of the electoral system. The intention for the 2018 electoral pilots is to test methods of mitigating the risk of electoral fraud. Watford Council has put forward the idea that the level of ID requirement should be as unobtrusive as possible and that rather than ask for formal documents such as a passport, requiring the poll card for voter eligibility would be sufficient. At the moment an elector would not be required to provide any form of ID at all. Cabinet Office was subsequently interested in testing this lower intervention approach.

4.2 The Mayor and the election agents were consulted and the Managing Director set out the proposal in his letter of 13 August to the Cabinet Office (attached as Appendix 2). The election agents had a mixed view – some were concerned that the introduction of ID would unfairly impact on particular communities but others welcomed any move to reduce the risk of fraud. Watford does not have a

major issue with election fraud but is of the view that demonstrating that minimum intervention can work is in the national interest. The pilot will cover the Mayoral and Borough Ward elections.

- 4.3 The key to making the ID pilot work in Watford well is to have extensive publicity – most voters bring their poll card anyway – to remind voters to do so and our pilot is such that in the absence of bringing the poll card other forms of ID such as a passport, driving licence, current bank or credit card is acceptable. The publicity plan agreed with the Cabinet office is attached to the equality impact assessment.
- 4.4 Modern Democracy Ltd will be providing the digital software to scan the poll cards at the polling station. The different scenarios that may arise have been anticipated with advice on how to deal with them is set out in the Appendix to the Equality Impact Assessment. Appendix 3 sets out a simple flowchart.
- 4.5 A full evaluation of the pilot will be undertaken including to assess whether there has been any impact on voter patterns. An equality impact assessment has also been undertaken (Appendix 4).

4.6 **How Watford Pilot solves possible disadvantages**

<p><i>Additional Voter ID checks will lengthen election process, possibly requiring additional polling stations, staff and cost</i></p>	<p>Simple instructions can be given to polling station staff. Some cost involved in setting up technology to record, but in the long-term could replace some stationary requirements. Any methodology of <i>ensuring</i> that current electorate has some form of ID, especially photo ID is likely to be far more expensive to both introduce and maintain.</p>
<p><i>Electors may get disenfranchised, on account of inability to provide certain forms of Voter ID</i></p>	<p>All individuals currently listed on the electoral register will have access to their poll cards, which will all be personally addressed, barcoded, enveloped and delivered</p>
<p><i>May reduce voter turnout through uncertainty of ID requirements, or more importantly due to queues</i></p>	<p>Simple message of “Bring Your Poll Card” to be communicated to the electorate. Barcode being read may be a faster process than looking up details within register – dependent upon individuals bringing poll cards to polling station.</p>

4.7 Implications

4.7.1 Financial

The costs of the Mayoral & Borough elections are provided for in the base budget. The additional costs of the pilot will be met by the Cabinet Office.

4.7.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

Under the constitution any function in the scheme of delegation that can be exercised by a committee, can in the event of a decision needing to be taken as a matter of urgency be exercised by the Managing Director. In this instance whilst the Cabinet Office wrote out to local authorities in March 2017 there were a number of discussions with the Cabinet Office with officers about whether they would include use of a poll card produced by the local authority in their pilot. Discussions then took place with both the Mayor and the election agents to gauge interest. Once all this had happened the Cabinet Office were pressing the Council to make a formal application as the original requirement was for such applications to be submitted by June 2017. As there was not then time to convene a Functions Committee in order for the Committee to make a decision, the Managing Director therefore used the urgency powers under the constitution to make the decision.

The formal Statutory Instrument implementing the Pilot for both the Mayoral and Borough elections has now been made.

Appendices

- 1. Elections Integrity Pilots Prospectus, Cabinet Office**
- 2. Returning officer letter of 13 August to Cabinet Office**
- 3. Watford Pilot flowchart**
- 4. Equality Impact Assessment**



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.



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Mark Hughes
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Enquiries to: Manny Lewis

Phone no: 01923 278185

Our reference:

Your reference:

Date: 13 August 2017

Dear Mark,

The Council requests that the Government includes Watford Borough as a local authority to pilot Voter Identification (Voter ID) at the local elections scheduled for May 2018 under Section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000.

We understand that the pilot scheme will require electors to provide a specified form of ID before they are able to cast their vote. Where an elector is unable to present the required form of ID they will be refused a ballot paper and will be unable to vote.

The purpose of the scheme is to trial various types of ID which may include photographic or non-photographic evidence. The Council's preferred type of ID to pilot would be bar coded poll cards plus both photographic ID and non-photographic ID in the absence of the poll card. We understand this is subject to approval by the Minister following further consultation with the Council, and we further understand that this process of consultation and approval will need to be completed by the time the Minister signs the relevant pilot Order.

The Council considers it meets the criteria as set out under Section 5.6 of the Prospectus issued in March 2017. Local elections, combined Mayoral and Borough Council elections are due to take place on 3rd May 2018 and the Council confirms it is able to demonstrate the following:

- *“there is local support for the pilot; the Elected Mayor, Dorothy Thornhill has given her support to the pilot. The election agents I consulted had a mixed view, there was some concern from them about the risk of voters being unable to vote as a*



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

result of losing or forgetting the necessary ID.

- *an understanding of the Government's objectives for the project and how the pilot fits with these objectives;*
- *the feasibility of delivering the pilot within the available time frame;*
- *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;*
- *any management of service supplier will be addressed;;*
- *an understanding of the contingencies you need to have in place – particularly to protect the security and integrity of the election;*
- *that there will be a clear and comprehensive communications plan covering all stakeholders;*
- *The Electoral Commission's evaluation process will be fully supported;*
- *the pilot has an effective business case and offers value for money;*
- *there is learning value to be gained from conducting the pilot and there is a clear means of testing the impact of the innovation;*
- *any innovation is at least as secure as conventional electoral practices; and*
- *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."*

We would be pleased for the Government to announce our participation in the Voter ID pilots. I understand that the date for the initial announcement of the first tranche of piloting authorities will be in September, that this date will be fully communicated to us in advance, and our respective communication teams will work closely together in the lead-up to the announcement.

Yours sincerely,



Manny Lewis
Managing Director & Returning Officer

WATFORD
PILOT

Customer attends polling station as per regulations required to confirm name and address; to check listed on election register.

Are they on register?

Yes

No

Request ID

Barcode Poll Card Presented

Other ID Presented

No Poll Card or alternative ID Presented

Barcode scanned

On list of (Watford's) approved ID
1.Passport;
2.Driving licence;
3.Residence Permit;
4. EEA Identity Card;
5.Credit/Debit card.

Not on list of approved ID

Can they bring Poll Card/

Yes

No

Request Poll Card or alternative ID is retrieved

Mark register and Issued Ballot

Do not issue Ballot Papers



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Watford Borough Council: Voter ID Pilot
Lead officer	Gordon Amos
Person completing the EIA	Kathryn Robson
Type of policy, function or service:	Existing (reviewed) <input type="checkbox"/> New/Proposed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Version & Date	Version 1 – 15.2.18

1. Background

In March 2017, the Cabinet Office invited local authorities to participate in a pilot study, which would assess different options aimed at reducing the possibility of election fraud at polling stations and, therefore, upholding the integrity of the electoral system. The pilots would take place for elections that were planned for 2018 and were to be based around voter ID at polling stations. For Watford these elections are for the directly elected Mayor of Watford as well as borough elections.

Whilst Watford has no evidence of fraud taking place within its elections, it has a good reputation for effective electoral management and so has been accepted as part of the voter ID pilot along with Woking, Gosport, Bromley and Swindon. Although all areas are involved in the one pilot, each is piloting different forms of voter ID, working closely with the Cabinet Office to complete the design and development of the pilots. This includes the development and delivery of an extensive engagement and communication plan.

The key for Watford to making the ID pilot work is, in advance of the pilot being introduced, to have undertaken a robust assessment of any issues that might impact on local residents' participation in the elections in May 2018 and to mitigate where issues have been identified. See this assessment below:

An unobtrusive / low intervention pilot

Watford Borough Council put forward the idea that the level of ID requirement should be as unobtrusive as possible and that, rather than ask for formal documents involving photo ID, such as a passport, the poll card would be sufficient to demonstrate for voter eligibility. At the moment an elector would not be required to provide any form of ID at all, although many do turn up with their polling card. Cabinet Office was interested in testing this lower intervention approach.

Alternative ID options

Whilst we are keen for people to produce a poll card, we were clear that we wanted other forms of ID to be acceptable at the polling station. Therefore, in the absence of the poll card, other forms of ID which most people would carry with them on a day to day basis such as a , driving licence or current bank or credit card, as well as a passport, will be acceptable in Watford. The council sees this as an important factor in ensuring that any risk of a voter presenting at a polling station on the day and being unable to vote due to lack of a poll card is significantly mitigated.

Raising awareness of the need to bring a poll card

Critical to the success of the voter ID pilot in Watford is an extensive communications campaign, supported by focused engagement, including for what are often termed 'harder to hear' or 'harder to reach' groups . This communications and engagement will focus primarily on reminding people to bring their poll cards to the polling station on the day. Most voters in Watford do bring their poll card when they vote but the council has also ensured that there is a comprehensive 'back up' for electors in the form of other acceptable ID. This will also be communicated to the electorate.

The communications plan is supported by the Cabinet Office both in terms of advice and financial resourcing. This is enabling Watford to undertake a comprehensive campaign beyond what it could achieve through its own resources. The other pilot areas are also providing support to the council through the regular sharing of good practice and feedback on what is working well.

See Appendix A

Raising awareness of what to do if polling card mislaid

The council has anticipated that the robust communications and engagement campaign will alert people to the importance of the polling card. This could lead to additional enquiries from people concerned if they mislay the card between receipt and the election. The council has put in place measures to manage this eventuality. Firstly, our frontline customer service team will be trained to

deal with enquiries and will resource the pre-election period so that enquiries and requests can be dealt with swiftly. Secondly, we are geared up to replace poll cards up until 9pm on day of Poll, 3 May.

Reducing the risk of delays at polling stations

The council is committed to staffing polling stations to ensure that there is sufficient support for those coming to vote. In addition, the polling stations will be supported by software that will scan the poll cards, speeding up the traditional manual processes to locate and mark the register entry and record the electors number on the corresponding numbers list prior to issue of ballot paper(s). The council has already commissioned a voter ID 'scenarios' briefing, which outlines the process for a large number of scenarios that could occur on Election Day. These are a detailed, step by step guide for election staff and should prevent delays at polling stations and good customer care in relation to those turning up to vote.

See Appendix B

Ensuring voter turnout remains at levels expected

Watford BC is confident that the mitigations it is putting into place for the voter ID pilot will ensure that voter turnout is not less than that achieved in previous years. The council will be monitoring voter turnout and this will be a critical factor in terms of its own evaluation of the pilot (it is a KPI target) and in the subsequent discussions with the Cabinet Office on whether we would recommend the pilot as a success.

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative, of the voter ID pilot in Watford on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010.

The characteristics to consider within this EIA are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership.

3. What we know about the Watford population

As this pilot relates to the Watford electorate, understanding the population is an important factor in assessing its impact.

Population

The current population of Watford is 96,800 (mid 2017 estimate) and is estimated to grow by 16% by 2026. Population growth estimates stated that they expected Watford to reach 100,000 by the end of 2017. In terms of gender breakdown, there are estimated to be fractionally more female than male residents but the difference is not significant.

Latest figures indicate that there is a total registered electorate of 74,522.

Ethnicity

Watford has a very diverse population more so than the rest of Hertfordshire.

For Watford, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%) and British other Asian 4.4%).

Census information is now nearly 10 years old and it is likely that the ethnic profile of the borough has changed during this time. For example, it would not have captured the more recent EU arrivals to the borough (EU2 countries – Romania and Bulgaria, who were given residency rights in 2014). We know from other data such as National Insurance Registration that Watford has experienced a relatively high increase in nationals from the EU2 countries applying for National Insurance registrations as Watford residents. This follows a period of a high number from EU8 countries (including Poland, Latvia, Lithuania) who were given freedom of movement to the UK from 2004. Throughout the period the arrival of new residents from south Asia (e.g. Pakistan / India) has remained relatively constant.

Other data sources, including school language survey on the languages spoken by Watford school children at home, endorse the National Insurance findings with English still the predominant language (at around 60%) followed by (in order of selection): Urdu, Polish, Tamil, Punjabi, Gujarati, Portuguese, Romanian and Hindi.

From our assessment of our 74,522 electorate the following main ethnicity groups have been identified.

- British – 61,399
- Polish – 1,791
- Romanian – 1,612
- Rep of Ireland – 1,389
- Indian – 1,079
- Portuguese – 758
- Italian – 747

In terms of who is eligible to vote in the local election in May the following people are included:

- British;
- British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (14 Countries + Channel Islands and Isle of Man respectively);
- Commonwealth (53 Countries)

and

- European Union (Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania;

Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden)

The ethnically diverse population can be a challenge for the council when it wishes to communicate and engage with local people as a 'one size fits all' will not realise the level of reach that is needed, particularly when we are promoting a 'call for action' as in this voter ID pilot. However, a robust and well-resourced communications plan should address all the different audiences, utilising a variety of channels and focusing on those areas where the messages need additional input.

Age

The largest populations by age band in Watford are:

- 25-44 (31,700)
- 45-59 (18,100)

The numbers in each successive age-band fall progressively until there are estimated to be 6,000 who are 75+. We know that around 74,000 residents are of voting age in Watford and that the borough has a younger profile than the rest of England.

From a communications and engagement perspective, we also know that different communication channels have different take up levels by age profile. This is another reason why the communications and engagement on the voter ID pilot has to be varied across channels, including face to face as well as the newer channels afforded by social media, which we know are more popular with our younger population.

Disability / Health

Around 85% of the population of Watford state that they have 'good health' and just under 14% record a disability. We do not have details as to what these disabilities are but are aware that these will range across a wide range of both physical disabilities and disabilities related to mental health and impairment.

All our polling stations are DDA compliant and election staff are trained to respond to any specific disability related requests.

Communications and engagement will need to take into account disability related issues that could impact on any residents accessing the council's messages regarding the voter ID pilot.

Religion / belief

In Watford, the religious breakdown in the Census 2011 of top five religions in Watford was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

Sexual orientation / Transgender

Watford has no specific data on the transgender community within the borough

Homelessness

Whilst this is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the council recognises that the particular circumstances of people without their own home might be a factor in their taking an active role in local democracy. We currently have 24 statutory homeless (December 2017) and 188 households in temporary accommodation (December 2017).

MOSAIC profile

Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our decision-making as well as underpinning our communications and

engagement.

MOSAIC GROUP	Group/Type Name	MOSAIC DESCRIPTION	Number of households in Watford	Watford Percentage	UK Percentage
1 J40	Career Builders	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4508	11.69%	1.59%
2 J44	Flexible Workforce	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	3123	8.10%	1.26%
3 D14	Cafés and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2837	7.35%	1.31%
4 I36	Cultural Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	2794	7.24%	1.37%
5 H35	Primary Ambitions	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	2391	6.20%	1.96%

Watford's MOSAIC profile (2016)

4. What we know from previous elections: turnout and polling station take up by the electorate

There are no directly comparable recent elections to the May 2018 as each election year different elections are held.

For this EIA, we have looked at the elections of 2017. This shows:

Electorate (total)	69,798
Votes (total)	22,360
Turnout (%)	32.04%
Postal votes (returned)	7,819
Polling station (turn out)	14,549

This shows that Watford still sees a higher turnout at polling stations than by postal voting, although around a third of people voting now do so by post and would not be affected by the voter ID pilot.

The following identifies the turn out across the borough in more detail at the election in 2017. This provides some additional support for the communications and engagement plan through identifying where differentiated communications might be effective:

WOODSIDE STANBOROUGH	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
Woodside Church of the Nazarene		247
Crèche, Woodside Leisure Centre		322
Orbital Community Centre		609
Orbital Community Centre		393
Leavesden Green Community Centre		321
Former Kingsway Baptist Church		636
Stanborough Centre		455
	1,230	2,005
TOTAL VOTES	3,235	

MERIDEN TUDOR	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
Coates Way JMI School		72
Garston Community Church		250
Garston Community Church		195
Meriden Community Centre		195
Meriden Community Centre		223
Parkgate Youth & Community Centre		170
Knutsford J.M.I. School		447
Knutsford J.M.I. School		375
Centrepoint House		68
	1,199	1,995
TOTAL VOTES	3,194	

NORTH WATFORD	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
The Orchard Primary School		247
The Orchard Primary School		322
St Helen's Church Hall		609
Cherry Tree Primary		393
Parkgate Youth & Community Centre		321
Grace Baptist Church Hall		636
Christchurch Hall		455
	1,129	2,983
TOTAL VOTES	4,112	

NASCOT PARK	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
Holy Rood Catholic Primary School		476
St Andrews Church Hall		482
St Andrews Church Hall		487
St Lukes Church Hall		603
St Lukes Church Hall		492
Clarendon Muse School of Music		329
Clarendon Muse School of Music		221
	1,794	3,090
TOTAL VOTES	4,884	

CENTRAL WATFORD & OXHEY	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
Centrepoint House		120
Watford Christian Spiritualist Church		310
Central Primary School		234
Holy Rood Premises		243
Wellspring Church Centre		238
Eastbury Court		232
Eastbury Court		250
Bushey & Oxhey Infants School		325
Bushey & Oxhey Infants School		326
	1,348	2,278
TOTAL VOTES	3,626	

WEST WATFORD	POSTAL VOTES	POLLING STATION VOTES
Multi-Cultural Community Centre		235
Multi-Cultural Community Centre		251
West Watford Community Centre		402
St James Road Baptist Church		331
Chessbrook Education Support Centre		273
Chessbrook Education Support Centre		283
Holywell Primary School		415
	1,119	2,190
TOTAL VOTES	3,309	

5. How will the council ensure equality is addressed through the Voter ID pilot

Under the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the proposals:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

A. Positive impacts

Through the voter ID pilot, the council is contributing to the integrity of the electoral system and taking steps to make sure that those registered to vote are able to exercise this democratic right.

The council believes that incidents of electoral fraud are likely to be accompanied by harassment and possible victimisation of the individual or individuals who are denied their own vote. This could be particularly disadvantageous to certain voter groups, particularly those who might be more vulnerable due to a protected characteristic such as age, disability (both physical and mental) or from being from a new community to the UK that might not have a good understanding of the British voting system and so could be open to exploitation. The same vulnerability could apply to homeless residents.

A positive impact of the voter ID pilot would be to help eliminate the harassment and victimisation potentially experienced by those who are vulnerable to being victims of electoral fraud.

In the same way, the voter ID pilot could advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those who do not share it. Where a protected characteristic might have a disproportionate impact on someone's vulnerability to election fraud then this would mean they do not have the same equality of opportunity within the electoral system as those who do not share it. The voter ID pilot, through requiring people to present ID and by raising the profile of elections and each individual's right to vote will advance equality of opportunity.

The Watford pilot is backed by an extensive communications and engagement programme, far beyond that the council is usually able to resource for elections within the borough, as it is supported by Cabinet Office resources. Through this, the council will raise awareness not just about the voter ID pilot but also about the elections overall. Elections are integral to building a strong, cohesive community where everyone feels they have a voice and a shared say in the decisions that impact their area. In this way the voter ID pilot can support good community relations. From the pilot, the council will be able to take on board lessons learnt for future campaigns so that its more limited resources can be targeted effectively.

B. Negative impacts

The voter ID pilot could, potentially, have the following negative impacts if effective mitigation is not put in place and implemented:

- **Confusion with electorate as a whole about the election requirements for May 2018**

Any change to an election could result in people questioning whether they have a right to vote in the election. However, all those entitled to vote will receive a polling card, which is a critical reminder of the election. It also has the positive benefit of being what people are used to receiving for all previous elections.

In addition, the council is undertaking a significant communications and engagement campaign on the election, which started in late 2017 and will gear up as we approach 3 May. The council has good take up of social media, which is important given the profile of the town – younger and known to be early adopters of new forms of communication – but this is being supported by more traditional methods, including face to face discussions with harder to reach communities such as our disabled community, recent arrivals and those in our temporary accommodation.

The council communications will be supported by the engagement done by local politicians who undertake substantial awareness raising in the run up to elections through door knocking and party political meetings and communications. In addition, all candidates and political parties will be provided with a ‘voter ID’ information pack to support them with their engagement with the borough’s electorate.

- **Voter ID pilot requirements not understood**

There is a risk of a negative impact if people do not understand the ‘bring your polling card message’ for the election in May. This could potentially impact groups with protected characteristics such older people, people from black and ethnic minority communities or people with disabilities.

However, the council believes that Watford is offering a low intervention / non obtrusive voter ID pilot that will deliver the benefits of improving the integrity of the election system without disenfranchising our electorate. This means that the messages we are communicating are clear and straight forward and, for many people who regularly bring their polling card to vote, there is ‘no change’ for this election. For those who don’t always bring the poll card, we are simply advising them to bring the card that they are familiar with at election time – it is not a new piece of election material to the Watford electorate. Additionally, we are offering alternative ID options.

Overall, through our pilot we are:

- providing all our electorate with a polling card as usual – this cuts across all communities and protected characteristics. Everyone on our register and eligible to vote on 3rd May will receive a poll card
- providing an opportunity to replace a poll card up until 9pm on day of Poll, 3 May.

- also accepting a range of alternative ID so that there are a number of other options for people if they should present at the polling station without the card. These include the most common form of ID that people would usually carry on them:
 - Valid British, European or Commonwealth passport
 - UK or EU photo-card driving licence (full or provisional)
 - Valid credit or debit card
 - Biometric Residence Permit
 - EEA Identity Card
 - Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card
- **Message re polling card and requirement to bring it to the polling station is not communicated effectively**

Whilst the council believes the voter ID pilot in Watford is not complex, we do recognise the importance of communicating and engaging extensively in the run up to the elections in May 2018. Working with the Cabinet Office, the council has developed an extensive communication and engagement plan. This goes far beyond the communication and engagement a local authority would usually undertake for an election.

The council also recognises that in a diverse borough, we need to target communications and engagement in a way that best meets the needs of communities, including to those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Some highlights of how we are communicating and engaging include:

- Sending out information with the council tax bill, which goes to every home in the borough
- Targeted social media message, which we can link to those areas which have a high turnout of polling station voting. Watford has good engagement figures through social media, partly reflecting the demographics of our population and their preferred forms of communication
- Face to face engagement with 'harder to hear' and 'harder to reach' groups to ensure the message is communicated effectively and to find out from them what else we could do to get our message across. The council has good connections with the borough's communities and will use these to organise the best ways to engage and communicate whether this is face to face or through community leaders. We will be able to use our Housing service to help with those who are homeless and in temporary accommodation
- Working with our partner organisations such as our leisure providers / Watford BID / schools and colleges to get the messages out
- Providing our electoral register canvassers and politicians with information on the pilot to support them when visiting residents
- Providing translation either through our website or through interpretation services
- Providing audio or larger size information through our website and our disability community groups

- **Voter turnout impacted**

The council is committed to running elections effectively and ensuring there are no barriers to our residents exercising their democratic right to vote. The voter ID pilot we have chosen to implement is the least complex and obtrusive amongst the initiatives that are being piloted to tackle potential electoral fraud.

We believe that the proactive mitigations that we have put in place will significantly reduce the risk of voter turnout being impacted and we will be turnout as a key KPI.

Overall conclusion

Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty

This EIA has taken into account the council's public sector equality duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to assist the council in meeting its duty. The council is required to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act**

The voter ID pilot will strengthen the link between the individual and their right to vote and provides some protection from harassment and victimisation that is associated with electoral fraud. Whilst Watford has no evidence of electoral fraud, residents with protected characteristics might be more at risk of being victims, which the voter ID pilot will address.

It is recognised that there is a potential for those with one or more of some protected characteristics to be disproportionately impacted if the voter ID is not understood or communicated effectively.

The council believes it has taken the necessary mitigating actions to prevent this impact through both the straightforward approach it has taken to the pilot, its early assessment of issues that could impact our electorate, the alternative options it has provided for people to confirm their identity and the extensive communications and engagement campaign agreed. This includes working with our community groups to reach those identified as potentially impacted.

- **advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it**

There are a number of positive impacts identified that advance equality of opportunity. As well as ensuring all individual electors can exercise their right to vote through reducing the risk of electoral fraud, the communications and engagement the council is undertaking means the general awareness of the right to vote, the election date and how to vote will benefit people with protected characteristics who might not hear election messages through the council's usual election communication. Often people with protected characteristics are in the harder to hear / harder to reach groups and these are being targeted through the communications and engagement planned by the council.

- **foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it**

The council believes that the awareness raising that is being created through this voter ID pilot will have a positive impact on community relations and cohesion as it will encourage people to engage with the local democratic process.

The overall conclusion of the EIA is that the positive impacts of the voter ID pilot outweigh the negative impacts, given the aim to reduce election fraud and promote people's engagement with the democratic process. The council will implement an extensive campaign to promote the voter ID

pilot to mitigate the potential negative impacts of disenfranchisement.

6. Recommendations

- Ensure the planned communication and engagement plan is implemented
- Ensure where feedback is received from communities that there is flexibility within the plan to adapt the campaign if required
- Ensure the pilot is evaluated effectively

Summary of potential positive and negative impacts on protected characteristics

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for decision
Age	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation (elderly and the young)</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Disability	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Race / Ethnicity	Positive	Negative	None	<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for decision
Sex / gender	Positive	Negative	None	<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation (</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Sexual orientation	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Religion	Positive	Negative	None	<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for decision
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation (elderly and the young)</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Gender orientation	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation (elderly and the young)</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p> <p>Watford is not seeking a photo form of ID, which might have discriminated against transgender residents – in fact the poll card provides a robust form of identification which would match the electoral register.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>The impact of not taking ID to the polling station.</p>
Homeless	Positive	Negative		<p>Positive</p> <p>Reduced risk of vulnerability to electoral fraud and exploitation (elderly and the young)</p> <p>Greater awareness of the elections and the right to vote including the date of the election and how to vote.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for decision
				<p>Watford is not seeking a photo form of ID, which might have discriminated against homeless residents – in fact the poll card provides a robust form of identification which would match the electoral register.</p> <p>Negative The impact of homeless person not collecting the required poll card from the Town Hall and taking ID to the polling station</p>

Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>- reduction in the risk of harassment and victimisation from electoral fraud</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment • Maternity/pregnancy • Homeless residents 	<p>Ensure the effective implementation of the voter ID pilot and promote through a robust communications and engagement campaign</p> <p>Robust training for election staff and frontline customer service staff to support the electorate before and on the day of the election</p>
<p>- fostering good relations within the community through encouraging people to vote and promoting the election date and how to vote</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment 	<p>Implement a robust communications and engagement campaign</p> <p>Robust training for election staff and frontline customer service staff to support the electorate before and on the day of the election</p>

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternity/pregnancy• Homeless residents	

Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>- confusion with electorate as a whole about the election requirements for May 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment • Maternity/pregnancy • Homeless residents 	<p>In terms of mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling card to each resident entitled to vote • Robust communication and engagement plan
<p>- voter ID pilot requirements not understood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender 	<p>In terms of mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling card to each resident entitled to vote • Robust communication and engagement plan • Targeted communications and engagement

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment • Maternity/pregnancy • Homeless 	
<p>- message re polling card and requirement to bring it to the polling station is not communicated effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment • Maternity/pregnancy • Homeless 	<p>In terms of mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling card to each resident entitled to vote • Robust communication and engagement plan • Targeted communications and engagement
<p>- voter turnout impacted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (older and younger electorate) • Disability (physical and mental health) 	<p>In terms of mitigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling card to each resident entitled to vote • Robust communication and engagement plan

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race / ethnicity • Religion / belief • Sex / gender • Sexual orientation • Gender reassignment • Maternity/pregnancy • Homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted communications and engagement <p>The pilot will be evaluated through a range of KPIs, the key one being voter turnouts remaining at a level that is considered acceptable for Watford.</p>

This EIA has been approved by:

Manny Lewis, Returning Officer

Date 15.2.18

**LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE
CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VOTER ID PILOTS**

LOCAL AUTHORITY	
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS	
CABINET OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS	Nancy Benson, Senior Campaign Manager Siobhan Bruce, Senior Press Officer
DATE	

SUMMARY

Cabinet Office has produced this form as a guide for local authorities planning their campaigns to support voter ID pilots in the May 2018 local elections.

This form will help us work together to plan your campaign and allocate resource.

You will be sent an invitation to meet with Cabinet Office Communications to work together to complete this form.

We have included guidance to help complete each section. There are tools and advice online here: <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/guide-to-campaign-planning-2/>

YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY

Use this section to describe your local authority

- Your local authority's involvement in the voter ID pilots
- Information about your constituency
- Any previous communications activity or media coverage on voter ID pilots in your area

Please provide a description of your local authority here:

WBC is a district council. It covers 8sq miles. It has been a Mayoral Authority since 2002. Baroness Dorothy Thornhill, Elected Mayor (since 2002) is retiring in May and we have a Mayoral election as well as borough election. As a result we would expect a higher than usual turn out for a local election.

Watford Borough Council has agreed to be a pilot area to test out voter ID. In Watford the intention is that voters use their poll card for their ID and bring that along with them. In the event they cannot find it on the day they will be able to use another form of ID instead: passport, driving licence, Residence Permit, EEA ID Card, Northern Ireland Voters ID card, current bank or credit card. Not all of these include photos, but do enable polling station staff to compare name, address and so on. Any doubt about ID and the voter will be referred to the town hall for confirmation of ID, and a decision as to whether they can vote.

There are 36 Ward Councillors, covering 12 Wards. Only one third of the council seats will be included in the election on 3 May, along with the Mayor.

(NB proxy votes and postal votes follow a different proof of ID process).

LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VOTER ID PILOTS

OBJECTIVES

Your Electoral Service Manager is working with Cabinet Office to build an evidence base to help introduce ID for the general election 2022.

To support this, local authority communications teams will pilot an awareness raising campaign to encourage eligible voters to bring ID to the polling station.

The campaign will run from August 2017 until the local elections in May 2018.

Use SMART objectives to outline what you want to achieve.

- **Specific** - exactly what you expect to achieve
- **Measurable** - a metric you will use to measure success
- **Attainable** - a target you can reach
- **Realistic** - an outcome that is possible
- **Timely** - a deadline that means you have delivered

Please outline your objective here:

To raise awareness that Watford is a pilot area and that ID will need to be taken to the polling station.

To ensure that all those registered to vote receive information that they need to take ID with them (the best ID will be their polling card).

To explain the process, e.g. take the Polling Card (failing that – photo ID...) and what happens if ID not provided.

Ensure polling station staff are fully briefed / trained to avoid chaos at polling station, or genuine voters being turned away inappropriately.

AUDIENCE INSIGHT

Use this section to provide information on your target audience, outlining what you know about your demographic including the communications channels they use and any barriers to bringing ID to the polling stations.

- Any audience data you have e.g. from your residents' survey
- Any relevant insights into the customer journey
- Stakeholders, influencers and channels
- What you want your audience(s) to think, feel and do

Please describe your audience here:

We have nearly 100,000 residents in Watford. The population is continuing to grow and is forecast to reach 110,000 by 2024. In comparison to national statistics, Watford has a relatively young population. Latest figures indicate that there is a total registered electorate of 74,522.

Majority are as follows:

British – 61399

Polish – 1791

Romanian – 1612

Rep of Ireland – 1389

Indian – 1079

Portuguese – 758

Italian – 747

**LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE
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Pakistani – 691

We may need to consider language barriers, particularly in the Asian community – e.g. Urdu, Punjabi, Gujerati.

We believe the Polish community generally speak good English. We need to investigate the Romanian, Portuguese and Italian communities to understand the language barriers.

STRATEGY

Use this section to explain how you will meet your objective.

Try to answer the question, how will you make sure eligible voters in your area remember to bring ID with them to the polling station?

Please outline your strategy here:

As we are a pilot area we consider this is ‘newsworthy’ and therefore will approach the local media to cover the story. In order for the Watford Observer to be favourable to council messages we will invite them in for a briefing. This generally leads to positive coverage and provides us with the chance to explain the campaign and answer questions – preventing inaccuracies in reporting.

The polling card is seen as the most important device – e.g. we could include bold or coloured text to explain to residents the need to keep it in a safe place and to take it with them when they go to vote. (could also be included on the envelope). It is also personalised.

We will use a combination of personal (individual or property) delivery methods to reach as many residents as possible.

We will also use a number of different high level channels to reach the mass audience including Waste Truck Panels, Bus Stop Posters, Bus Advertising, Radio advertising, and press.

We will maximise the use of council channels in order to minimise costs: About Watford magazine, E-newsletters/emails, social media, council – managed poster sites.

In addition, our Canvassers will be provided with leaflets / information on the need for ID as well as advice on what to do if residents don’t speak English.

We will use social media to target different audiences, e.g. young people, mums and other groups.

Whilst the pilot is being announced in September via the media, our main campaign will commence in the new year. (The build-up prior to Christmas will mostly focus on encouraging people to register to vote).

IMPLEMENTATION

Use this section to outline key dates for campaign delivery from September 2017 to May 2018.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE
CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VOTER ID PILOTS**

Please add your key campaign dates here:

Friday 15 September

Pilots for voter ID announced by the Cabinet.

Pilot local authorities:

- Issue local version of press release (adapted from a template provided by the Cabinet Office),
- Brief their Customer Service teams and provide Q and A information
- Provide information on the website, with a link / image on the home page.

Weekend 16-17 September

Press Office available to field calls / enquiries from the media in response to the press releases.

Please note, our IT system will be down from 5pm on Friday 15 to 8am on Monday 18 September to enable essential work to take place.

W/c 18 September

Brief the local media including: Watford Observer, My Local News, BBC Three Counties Radio, Vibe Radio, Heart Radio).

Provide response to social media / media enquiries.

October November

Promote annual canvass

Provide leaflets and advice to canvassers on requirement for Voter ID and to keep their polling card safe.

Monthly e-newsletter

W/c 4 December

Feature article in About Watford (residents' magazine). This is distributed to all households in the borough, and available at town hall, museum, etc for pick up.

It will be available online from 4 December.

Main focus will continue to encourage residents to register to vote but will also include a 'flash' or 'advert' about needing voter ID, and a link to more information on the website.

Monthly e-newsletter

January 2018

Develop posters, banners etc with information about register to vote, and about the need for Voter ID.

Posters will be displayed at:

105 bus stops around the borough

5 high street six sheets along Watford High Street.

A0 poster site in town hall customer services

A2 poster sites in the Underpass leading from the High Street to the town hall, Central Watford Leisure Centre and West Herts College.

Monthly e-newsletter

Social media

March 2018

A5 Leaflet inserted with council tax bill mailing

About Watford magazine - final edition prior to election. Promote last chance to register (April) Also explain voter ID requirements.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE
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Bus advertising – e.g. bus rears or internal panels, depending on availability (cannot control entirely within borough)

Waste truck panels – e.g. 10 panels.

We will work with the local media – Watford Observer, BBC 3 Counties, VIBE, Heart and local magazines such as My local news, to negotiate coverage, or buy advertising space if necessary.

Monthly enewsletter

Email signature banner

Social media

Work with partners – e.g. Everyone Active, Town Centre BID, to include information in their newsletters, display posters and pull up banners.

April 2018 (up to 3 May) lead up to election

Refresh leaflet and either distribute with canvassers or use a door drop delivery company to go to all households.

Provide 'credit card sized' cards – information on reverse of the id requirements.

Updated website – home page

Refresh outdoor poster sites – 105 bus stops and 5 high street poster sites, underpass and customer services.

Monthly enewsletter

Refresh waste truck panels

More extensive social media – using boosts etc.

Use the polling card / envelope to communicate the message.

Polling station sites – posters/banners near / outside leading up to and on the polling day to say that voters need polling card / id

RESOURCES

Use this section to identify and cost resources you need to deliver this campaign. This might include producing promotional materials or buying advertising.

Please identify and cost the resource you need to deliver this campaign:

See table at end of plan.

EVALUATION

**LOCAL AUTHORITY TEMPLATE
CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VOTER ID PILOTS**

Use this section to outline how you will evaluate the impact and success of your campaign against your objectives. Useful resource: Government Communication Service Evaluation framework: <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation/tools-and-resources/>

Please outline how you will evaluate the impact of your campaign:

OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT
About Watford magazine Email – Gov Delivery Council tax mailing Door dropped leaflet	Reach c 38000 homes Reach c 4,000 registered Reach c 40,000 homes Reach c38000 homes	Main council mouthpiece Interested in this subject Likely to be seen Solus mailing gives standout
Waste truck panels Bus stop posters Other posters	Large format in borough Borough-wide – reach mums, younger people, older people	Highly visible every day Reach additional target audiences, time to read.
Email signature banner	Goes out on all external watford emails	
Website	Interested people will find	Home page news
Press releases Press and radio releases/advertising Social media Polling card/envelope	There is a definite news element Good reach and can be targeted through boosts etc	A ‘press briefing’ with WO may result in positive / high level coverage Can be used effectively to support the customer journey
Pull up banners	Increase visibility in key areas	Support from partners
Partners – BID, Police station, West Herts College, Veolia, Everyone Active, CAB etc. Leaflets / door drops	Reach different audiences Can be targeted to different areas, or different languages	Extend reach through additional newsletters etc Ensure not criticised of missing BME / hard to reach
Business card or book mark	Distributed via canvass	Easy to keep in wallet, purse or book (useful reminder)

Agenda Item 5

Part A

Report to: Council Functions Committee
Date of meeting: 26 February 2018
Report of: Head of Finance
Title: Setting the Council Tax for financial year 2018/19

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report consolidates the decisions of this Council and the two precepting bodies to give the overall Council Tax for residents of Watford for 2018/19.

2.0 Risks

2.1 All risks around the Council budget are listed below and were contained in the Financial Planning report taken to Council on 30 January 2018. There are no direct risks arising from the recommendation of this report as it is a legal requirement that it is agreed.

The potential budget risks are shown below; (based on a calculation of severity of impact (1 – 4) and likelihood of risk materialising (1 - 4); 1= very low risk, 16 = a very high risk)

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That Functions does not agree the council tax before the statutory date	The Council tax charge is not set	Revert to prior year's tax base	Treat	1
That Cabinet does not recommend revenue and capital estimates for 2018/19 to Council	The Council does not legally set a budget	Revert to previous MTFS	Treat	1
That the Council will exceed its borrowing parameters	Breach of Treasury Management Strategy (TMS)	Revision of TMS Prudential indicators	Treat	1

That the Council will be unable to service its annual borrowing costs	Budget Pressure	Provision in MTFS for anticipated borrowing	Tolerate	1
Investment with a counterparty that subsequently defaults	Recovery of principal will take longer	Invest in accordance with TMS	Tolerate	2
That the estimates used in the preparation of the report will not be sufficiently accurate.	Budget not correct	Mitigate through in year budget monitoring. Reset Budget at period 8	Treat	3
That the Council will not have adequate reserves to manage emerging risks.	Reserves diminish	Increase general fund balance to £2M	Treat	3

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 That the Committee formally sets the total Council Tax for Watford Borough Council, which includes the precepts for Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, as set out in the report.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact Bob Watson, Head of Finance, telephone 727188,
 Email: bob.watson@threerivers.gov.uk

Report approved by: Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance (Shared Services)

4.0 Detailed Proposal

- 4.1 Council approved its budget and Council Tax (a 2.99% increase for a Band D property) for 2018/19 at its meeting on 22 January 2018. The Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown in paragraph 3.2 below for 2018/19 and the Committee is now required to set the total Council Tax for 2018/19.
- 4.2 The figures for all Council Tax bands for each body are set out in the table below. Having calculated the aggregate in each case, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings as outlined below.

2018/19			Watford BC	Herts CC	Herts CC Social Care	Police & Crime Commissioner	Total
			<i>Precepting Authorities</i>				
Valuation Band	Ratio		£	£	£	£	£
A	6	9	174.97	816.46	63.85	109.33	1,164.61
B	7	9	204.14	952.51	74.51	127.56	1,358.72
C	8	9	233.30	1,088.60	85.14	145.78	1,552.82
D	9	9	262.46	1,224.67	95.79	164.00	1,746.92
E	11	9	320.78	1,496.83	117.07	200.44	2,135.12
F	13	9	379.11	1,768.96	138.37	236.89	2,523.33
G	15	9	437.43	2,041.13	159.64	273.33	2,911.53
H	18	9	524.92	2,449.34	191.58	328.00	3,493.84

- 4.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire agreed a £12 increase (Band D property) in his precept requirement for 2018/19. Hertfordshire County Council agreed a 2.99% increase on its relevant basic amount of council tax and a 3% increase relating to the social care fund for 2018/19.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.2 The financial implications that apply to this Council were set out in the budget report to Council on 30 January 2018.

5.2 Legal Issues

5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that this is the final part in the process of setting the Council Tax prior to billing. It is a legal requirement that this is agreed.

5.3 Equalities / Human rights

5.3.1 Watford Borough Council is committed to equality and diversity as an employer, service provider and as a strategic partner. In order to fulfil this commitment and its duties under the Equality Act 2010 it is important to demonstrate how policies, practices, and decisions impact on people with different protected characteristics. It is also important that the Council is not discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of its functions.

5.3.2 There are no direct equality issues from the recommendation in this report.

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report

Report to Council 30 January 2018

File Reference

None