



Derby City Council

COUNCIL CABINET **05 August 2015**

Report of the Corporate Scrutiny and
Governance Board

ITEM 8

Review of Voter Turnout

SUMMARY

1.1 In response to lower voter turnout at local elections in Derby compared to some of the neighbouring authorities, the Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Board conducted an in-depth review on voter turnout. This involved extensive consultations and engagement with a number of local groups including younger and older people as well as a public survey to look at why people vote or don't vote at elections. The Board also considered national and international voter experiences and made the recommendations below which, if implemented, could help to improve the turnout in the city:

- Council to explore ways of providing easier and more convenient access to voting
- More/ better engagement with the electorate to build trust
- Target and engage young people early in the democratic process
- Consider lowering the voting age to 16
- Make greater use of social media
- Encourage employers to consider giving employees time off to vote at elections
- Support the change of the electoral cycle from election by thirds to all out four yearly elections

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To consider and implement the recommendations of the Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Board's on voter turnout.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Implementing the Board's evidence based recommendations should help to improve Derby's voter turnout and bring it in line with some of the highest turnout authorities.

Achieving a higher voter turnout improves accountability and increases public confidence in local politics.

- 3.2 The Council constitution allows scrutiny boards to conduct service reviews and submit up to two topic reports to Council Cabinet each year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Board formally agreed the report attached in appendix 2 at its 20 April 2015 meeting.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Olu Idowu – Head of Legal Services Liz Moore - Acting Head of Service – Business Partner, Strategic HR Support and Equalities
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Mahroof Hussain 01332 643647 mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Review of Voter Turnout final report

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are likely to be costs associated with delivering some of the recommendations contained in this report. However due to the financial pressures faced by the Council it is Board's desire to keep these to a minimum.

Legal

- 2.1 Article 6.3 of the Council Constitution allows overview and scrutiny boards to assist the Council and the Council Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy.
- 2.2 There are likely to be legal implications arising from this report when taking actions to address low voter turnout. These will become clearer as the detail surrounding each of the agreed proposals is resolved.

Personnel

- 3.1 The report makes a number of recommendations some of which may have personnel implications. However these have yet to be evaluated. More detailed analysis of the personnel implications will be required if the recommendations are accepted.

IT

- 4.1 The report makes a number of recommendations some of which are likely to have IT implications. Recommendations to improve engagement with young people, greater use of social media will have IT implications.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The review identifies lower voter turnout within electoral wards with higher levels of deprivation. It also highlights that the need to do more outreach work with Deaf people and minority communities to make sure they are fully aware of the voting systems.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 The Council Plan 2015- 18 makes the following pledges over the next three years:

- A safe and pleasant environment for you to live and work.
- A strong community where we feel empowered and businesses are supported to grow.
- An ambitious and forward looking city with good prospects for everyone.
- A resilient Council, focusing on how we as a Council can deliver our services going forward.