

## **Implementation of Individual Electoral Registration**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A new national system of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) will be implemented from 1 July 2014.
- 1.2 A joint programme, led by The Cabinet Office and IER Digital Service Implementation Team and supported by the Electoral Commission is being put in place to enable Electoral Services teams both locally and nationally to effectively manage the transition. Locally, the project is led by Legal and Democratic Services and reports regularly to the Resources Programme Board.
- 1.3 The new system of individual registration will replace the current system of household registration. Benefits are likely to lead to improvements in the integrity of the voting process and reductions in the risk of electoral fraud. Voters will also have the opportunity to register to vote electronically as part of the project from 1 July 2014 onwards

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To note the steps being taken to prepare for the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014
- 2.2 To note that the progression for implantation is being monitored by the Resources Programme Board.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 has fundamentally overhauled how an eligible person registers to vote. These are national changes and the Local Authority is in receipt of guidance from the Cabinet Office and the Electoral Commission on the key implementation stages and timeframes.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 The implementation of Individual Electoral Registration constitutes a fundamental overhaul within the election process. The traditional household registration whereby one member of the household takes responsibility for registering all those resident in the house who are eligible to vote will change to a system of each eligible person taking personal responsibility for their registration to vote.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Office and IER Digital Service Implementation Team supported by the Electoral Commission has offered substantial guidance to Local Authorities in terms of project planning and implementation phases. This is to ensure that there is consistent overall national implementation and that “teething troubles” can be identified and resolved collectively.
- 4.3 The Council’s Electoral Services Team is working with key stakeholders in the Council to support the implementation programme. Most recently support has been sought from ICT as focus has been on ensuring that the electronic data matching between the Council and the Department of Work and Pensions is functional.
- 4.4 In July 2013, a “Confirmation Dry Run” exercise took place which allowed the Authority to discover the percentage of electors that could automatically transfer to Individual Electoral Registration based on current register information. The percentage match rate is 78.6% compared to the average match rate of similar sized authorities of approximately 70%. Further work will be done during the summer and autumn in an attempt to improve the match rate so that at the go live date as many electors as possible will be confirmed as eligible under Individual Electoral Registration.
- 4.5 From 1 July 2014 all new registrants must provide their name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number as part of their application to register. Electors will only be placed on the Electoral Register after their existing registration details have been checked and confirmed against trusted data sources from the Department for Work and Pensions. Those electors where details automatically match will be sent a letter confirming their registration. Where electors details do not match further investigations will be required using additional data sources.

- 4.6 Those persons requiring a postal, proxy or postal proxy vote will need to be successfully registered under Individual Electoral Registration from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, for those arrangements to continue.
- 4.7 If a person refuses to provide the required information to the Electoral Registration Officer, they may be subject to a fine or prosecution, however details relating to this are still to be determined by the Cabinet Office.

#### Publicity for Individual Electoral Registration

- 4.8 The last traditional city wide annual household registration canvass will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. The revised register of electors will be published on completion of the canvass on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The Council will take this canvass opportunity to provide details to all households about the elector registration changes and clearly advising them of the imminent changes.
- 4.9 A national programme of publicity will be developed in the lead up to the implementation date and this will be complimented by local publicity. The Communications Team is supporting the Electoral Services Team in developing the local campaign.

#### **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 No other options are being considered due to this being a statutory requirement under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Janie Berry, Director of Legal & Democratic Services     Mick Styne, Elections and Land Charges Manager
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 Funding for the additional requirements of the project, above current budgets, will be made available and will be based on a mixture of formulaic and justification led grants determined by the Cabinet Office at specified stages of the project. These funds will be paid to the Council directly through non ring-fenced grants under s31 Local Government Act 2003 until 2015/16 beyond which it is anticipated to be incorporated into mainstream funding. The Cabinet Office has pledged to meet the additional costs incurred with the transition to Individual Electoral Registration.

**Legal**

- 2.1 Individual Electoral Registration is a statutory duty under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 Where recruitment and staffing issues arise during the implementation process these will be discussed and agreed with HR in advance of implementation.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken during this implementation programme.

**Health and Safety**

- 5.1 Specific risk assessments will be carried out in relation to canvassing of properties as part of the Individual Electoral Registration implementation programme.

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1 Consideration will be given to environmental impacts on the implementation of this change as it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in paper and resources by promoting the electronic means of electoral registration.

**Property and Asset Management**

- 7.1 No issues directly arising.

**Risk Management**

- 8.1 Project risks will be recorded and assessed during the project implementation and will be monitored by the Resources Programme Board.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 9.1 The implementation of Individual Electoral Registration contributes directly to the objectives of providing good quality services that meet local need and Safer and Stronger Communities.