
REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 11
DATE OF MEETING:	24 AUGUST 2023	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	ARDIP SANDHU ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER	DOC:
SUBJECT:	ELECTIONS - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE	REF: FM06
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve the updated Public Engagement Strategy annexed to this report as **Appendix 1**.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 Approval of the Public Engagement Strategy which details how the Council is and will publicise and encourage residents to register to vote.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is the person with statutory responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the register of electors and the absence voters lists. This person takes responsibility for publishing a revised electoral register and issuing monthly alteration notices.
- 3.2 The ERO is an officer of the Council, but the role is personal, independent and separate from their duties as an employee of the Council.
- 3.3 The ERO has a general duty to promote participation in the electoral process. The introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) presented the ERO with key challenges in this regard. Maximising the number of electors registered under IER relied on an effective local public engagement strategy and robust processes to support it. One of the key challenges in the transition was to encourage residents to take the required action to join or remain on the register, and where appropriate to ensure that they could vote by post or by proxy if they so wished.
- 3.4 The Public Engagement Strategy attached at Appendix 1 details the ways in which the ERO has and is promoting participation in the election process.
- 3.5 The ERO has used this process to communicate the introduction of Voter ID for the forthcoming election.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None directly arising from this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 The efficient conduct of the electoral registration process and elections is one of the highest-profile functions that the Council undertakes. Any challenge to these processes could result in adverse publicity and legal sanctions against the Returning Officer personally as well as the Council.

6.0 Equity and Equalities

6.1 The Strategy aims to address any equality issues.

7.0 Background Papers

7.1 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.