

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Directorate: **Strategic Director**

Lead officer responsible for EIA: **Head of Administrative Services**

Name of the policy or function to be assessed: **Voter ID pilot at the elections on 2 May 2019**

Names of the officers undertaking the assessment: **Sue Rodden**

Is this a new or an existing policy or function? **New**

1. What are the aims and objectives of the policy or function?

- To enhance public confidence in the way in which the elections are run in Broxtowe, and to reduce any perception of/opportunity for electoral fraud.
- To test if the requirement to produce ID at the polling station provides a barrier to voting and has a negative impact on turnout.
- To ensure that all eligible electors in Broxtowe entitled to vote at the local Council elections on 2 May 2019 are aware that on polling day they will be required to take (the appropriate) ID to the polling station so that they can cast their vote.
- To provide clear and accessible information so that anyone who wants to vote, understands what they need to do
- To encourage all eligible voters to take the appropriate ID to the polling station on polling day.
- To minimise the potential of voters being turned away from the polling station for not presenting ID or presenting an incorrect form of ID.
- To work with the Council's partners to ensure that any hard to reach groups in the Borough are contacted and information made available on the requirements of the pilot.

2. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy or function?

- Enhanced public confidence in the way in which the elections are run.
- Reduced perception of/opportunity for electoral fraud.
- Improved integrity of elections and openness and transparency.
- Enhanced profile of the Electoral Services team in the electoral environment.

3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy or function?

- Residents of the borough.
- Staff (core electoral services and temporary staff including polling staff).

- Political parties.
 - Prospective candidates and agents.
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4. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy or function?

- Residents of the borough.
 - Returning Officer.
 - Staff (core electoral services and temporary staff including polling staff).
 - Political parties.
 - Prospective candidates and agents.
 - Disability groups.
 - Ethnic minority groups.
 - Elderly residents.
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5. What baseline quantitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands?

An evaluation of similar pilots carried out in 2018.

6. What baseline qualitative data do you have about the policy or function relating to the different equality strands?

An evaluation of similar pilots carried out in 2018.

7. What has stakeholder consultation, if carried out, revealed about the nature of the impact?

None as yet. Consultation will be carried out with the Disability Forum and ethnic minority groups in the New Year. Feedback will also be sought through Community Action Teams and attendance at other community events.

8. From the evidence available does the policy or function affect or have the potential to affect different equality groups in different ways?

In assessing whether the policy or function adversely affects any particular group or presents an opportunity for promoting equality, consider the questions below in relation to each equality group:

Does the policy or function target or exclude a specific equality group or community?

No.

Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently? If yes, can this be justified?

Inspection of photographic ID will require a niqab (a face veil worn by some Muslim women) to be removed. This will affect female members of the Muslim faith only - see section 9.

Is the policy or function likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups or communities? If no, can this be justified?

The requirements of the pilot will apply to all electors.

Are there barriers that might make access difficult or stop different equality groups or communities accessing the policy or function?

Yes – voters with language barriers where English is not their first language, visually impaired voters, voters with learning disabilities and voters with mental health issues may have difficulty in accessing information about the requirements of the pilot. See also section 9.

Could the policy or function promote or contribute to equality and good relations between different groups? If so, how?

What further evidence is needed to understand the impact on equality?

The evaluation of the 2018 pilots did not suggest that any groups were disadvantaged because of the requirement to provide ID. However, any feedback from the consultation will be considered in running the pilot in Broxtowe.

9. On the basis of the analysis above, what actions, if any, will you need to take in respect of each of the equality strands?

Age:

From the list of accepted IDs, it is unlikely that there will be anyone in this protected characteristic unable to vote. However age related impairments such as degeneration in sight and hearing affecting older voters may make it more difficult for them to access information on the requirements of the pilot. Electoral Services will assist any individuals, including by visiting them at home, to advise them on the documents which will be acceptable to enable them to vote at a polling station if they do not have the necessary photographic ID. An invitation will be sent to all nursing homes in the borough for Electoral Services to speak to residents about the ID requirements. Contact will also be made with Age UK about making information available to service users.

Disability:

Before polling day, details of the pilot will be sent to all groups represented on the Disability Forum and an offer for Electoral Services to speak further with the Forum or individual groups, if required. Electoral Services will assist any individuals, including by visiting them at home, to advise on the documents which will be

acceptable to enable them to vote at a polling station if they do not have the necessary photographic ID.

Polling staff will be trained to assist any disabled voters who go to polling stations to vote.

An easy to understand process for voting in the pilot will be available on the Council's website to assist voters with learning difficulties.

Gender:

This characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken.

Gender Reassignment:

Whilst this characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken, the training for polling staff will include gender reassignment and the need for awareness and discretion if there appears to be a difference between the gender of the voter or the name which a voter gives and details on the register.

Marriage and Civil Partnership:

This characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken. However, advice is being sought from Cabinet Office on the acceptance of a birth certificate as document evidence where an elector has got married/changed their name by deed poll and their surname is different to that on the register. This document will be updated to reflect that advice. The requirement to provide a marriage certificate or other document where an elector has married/changed their name since the register was published will be included in publicity and included in polling staff training.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

This characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken.

Race:

This characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken.

Religion and Belief:

Female Muslims who wear a niqab (a face veil worn by some Muslim women) will need to remove it for the purpose of checking their ID. A separate room or screened off part of the polling station will be available for this. Wherever possible a female will be appointed to each polling station so that ID checks can be carried out by a female if requested. Alternatively, a female from a nearby polling station, Polling Station Inspector or Electoral Services staff will go to the polling station to do this.

Sexual Orientation:

This characteristic has no bearing on the pilot being undertaken.

10. Head of Service:

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA. I undertake to review and monitor progress against the actions proposed in response to this impact assessment:

Signature of Head of Service: