SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council   **DATE:** 28th September 2017

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WARD(S):   All

PART I
FOR DECISION

VOTER ID ELECTORAL PILOT – MAY 2018

1   **Purpose of Report**

To advise the Council of progress on the arrangements for the Council's participation in the Voter ID Pilot and seek confirmation of the scope of the pilot to be undertaken at the local elections in May 2018.

2   **Recommendation**

The Council is requested to consider the report and agree the main scope of the Pilot for the May 2018 local elections and resolve that the Returning Officer continue to work with the Cabinet Office to deliver the Pilot.

3   **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Cabinet Office funding will be provided to cover expenditure on the Pilot.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with this report.

4   **Supporting Information**

Background

4.1   In December 2016 the Government announced that it intended to introduce a number of voter ID pilots for the May 2018 elections as a precursor to legislating to ensure a form of identification must be presented before voting.

4.2   At its meeting on 31st January 2017 the Council unanimously agreed that the Government's announcement to introduce voter ID pilots be welcomed and resolved to encourage the Returning Officer to work with the Cabinet Office to ensure that Slough was involved in a pilot scheme to trial recommendations such as the use of ID in polling stations across Slough at the next local government elections in 2018.

4.3   The Cabinet Office was formally advised of Slough's wish to participate in any initiatives that may combat fraud and improve electoral integrity and officers have been working closely with the Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission to consider

the pilot methodology. The Cabinet office is keen to ensure there is support from elected members, that there is the right mix of authorities taking part and that the criteria and assessment process is understood by all stakeholders.

4.5   On 15th September 2017 the Cabinet Office announced those Council's that have been selected to take part in the pilot as Bromley, Gosport, Slough, Watford and Woking.

4.6   With the agreement of Group Leaders a Steering Group of elected members has been established to work with the Returning Officer on the arrangements for the Pilot. The Steering Group consists of Councillors Bains, Brooker, Coad, Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Sadiq and Sohal. The Group met on 19th September 2017 to consider the methodology and scope for the pilot and noted that a report would be submitted to this meeting of the Council.

Scope and Methodology

4.7   The exact terms of reference for the scope of the pilot are still to be finalised with the Cabinet Office and will be the subject of a Ministerial Order.

4.8   The Cabinet is keen to trial various types of ID that would need to be produced by the voter at the polling station in order to vote. The pilots would provide evidence to ensure and assure decisions to implement voter ID nationally. There are a variety of trials that could be considered including either photographic and non-photographic ID or a combination of both. In considering a realistic and meaningful scope we have had regard to looking at ID that electors are already likely to hold and the potential to issue something to electors who did not hold any of the required IDs.

4.9   After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the various ID requirements I am proposing that Slough should trial a combination of ID requirements such as nationally recognised photographic identification and photo voter ID cards issued by Electoral Services. I consider that the requirement to show photographic ID evidence at the poll station may be the most likely ID to be already held by the voter, the most logical form of ID to improve the security of the vote and a scope that could realistically be delivered for the May 2018 elections.

4.10 To ensure the communications around the Pilot are as clear as possible the Pilot should be Borough wide (i.e. not some Wards only). A full communications strategy would be worked up in conjunction with the Cabinet Office and delivered ahead of the elections. Effective communication that encourages eligible voters to bring ID to the polling station will be key to the success of the Pilot.

4.11 A briefing note setting out the some of the considerations around possible ID requirements is attached. The exact requirements and detailed methodology of the Pilot will be the subject of ongoing work to ensure that voters are clear what will be necessary to vote and any disadvantages/issues are mitigated as far as possible.

5   Conclusion

5.1   Taking part in the Voter ID Pilot will be an opportunity to showcase Slough's election project planning and maximise the potential to reduce or eliminate the risk of personation at the polling station.

6   **Background Papers -** None.

Background

1   There currently is no legal requirement for a voter to present any form of ID at the polling station. The voter simply needs to confirm their full name and address.

2   After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the various forms of ID that could be piloted I consider that the requirement to show photographic evidence of ID at the poll station may be the most likely ID to be already held by the voter, the most logical form of ID to improve the security of the vote and is a scope that could realistically be delivered for the May 2018 elections.

Photographic ID
The proposed scope is based on several factors including:

- Photo ID is primarily already presented routinely as evidence by residents registering to vote who have not been verified with DWP;
- Photo ID at the polling station will reduce the risk of personation and clerical errors when issuing ballot papers. The level of proof of identity is greater than with non photo ID.
- The proposal is for the voter to use their own Photo ID card or opt to request a Photo Voter ID card from Electoral Services at any time up to and including polling day for any residents that do not have photo ID
- Feedback from Polling Staff that a number of residents already bring ID to the polling station and calls to Electoral Services to query why ID is not required at the polling station.
- The list of acceptable forms of photo ID can be agreed so that it is as wide and inclusive as possible.

Pilot	Voter ID Scope	Proposed Photo ID to accept (1 x photo ID required)	Recommended Criteria	Pilot Area
	To present at the polling station: A nationally recognised photographic identification chosen from a list of accepted photo ID cards, including the Electoral Services issued Voter Registration ID Card (Photo).	- Passport (UK or Overseas) - Driving License (UK or Overseas) - Rail Travel Card ID - Older persons bus pass ID - Student Rail Travel Card ID - Employment Work Photo ID - Student Photo Card ID - Biometric UK residence	The photo ID to contain the full name (first and surname and any middle initial); **Confirmation being sought from the cabinet office if an initial first name could be accepted on a photo ID.**	Whole borough

		permit		
		• Membership Card (photo)		
		• Electoral Registration Voter ID Card		
		The proposed photo ID list can be amended or extended		

An elector who has no Photo ID would be able to come to SMP before Polling day and on Polling day ((7am – 9pm) and bring:

Two of the following proof of address:

- Birth Certificate (in English)
- Marriage certificate
- Utility Bill (name must be full on document)
- Personal Bill statement (name must be full on document)
- Bank Statement
- Poll Card

Once verified the resident would be issued with an instant photo 'Voter ID Card'.

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3. Non-Photo ID

Set out below are some of the considerations that need to be taken into account if the scope of the pilot was to be non photo ID.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Non photo - accept both paper and electronic	In reference to table 2 below, the resident will need to present 2 documents at the polling station. Either 2 from table 2 or 1 from each table.
Non-photo easy to access, particularly electronic statements on phone Apps etc	Paper documents must contain full first name and surname and any middle initials
	Paper documents can easily be fraudulently altered, especially electronic documents, such as, bank statements or utility bills.
	Checking paper documents at the polling station could be time consuming which may impact on queues forming at the polling station.

	Detailed training to poll clerks will need to be provided in order to identify legitimate documents
	Birth Certificates can come in various languages and forms, which may cause problems for the polling staff to verify. This may lead to Presiding Officers rejecting this ID on that basis.
	Some parts of the community where residents may not have any form of non-photo ID apart from a poll card, in which case they would need to seek an additional document to present at the polling station.

The proposed non photo documents to be presented at the polling station could be as follows:

Table 1 Non-Photo (1 x Trusted government document required)	Table 2 Non-Photo (2 x documents required – this can include 1 x document from table 1 trusted government document)
Birth Certificate (UK & Overseas)	Utility Bill
Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate	Council Tax
Paper version of the driving license (UK only)	Bank or building society Statement
	State Benefit/Pension Book
	P45 – P60 statement
	Mortgage Statement
	Credit Card Statement
	Poll Card

Recommended Criteria
• Non-photo ID must contain full name (first and surname and any middle initial);
• Overseas include Commonwealth and European Member state countries only.