



HM Government

Electoral Integrity Pilots Prospectus 2018

Issued August 2018

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction & contact

- 1 As part of the Government's manifesto commitment to ensure that a form of identification must be presented before voting, five voter ID pilots took place at the local elections on 3 May 2018. Due to an extensive public awareness campaign and tireless work from our partnering local authorities, the AEA and Electoral Commission, the pilots ran smoothly with the vast majority of voters being able to vote.
- 2 In order for us to have a deeper understanding of how voter ID will work on a wider scale and what works best for voters, we plan to continue to pilot voter ID at next year's local elections. We want councils to get involved and work with us to pilot in their area to help us promote greater confidence in our democratic processes.
- 3 We are inviting expressions of interest from local authorities in England, where Local Government elections are scheduled for 2 May 2019. Local authorities would run electoral pilots to test the use of ID in polling stations. The evaluation from the poll will be taken into account and used to shape how the final policy will look when it is introduced.
- 4 We also welcome expressions of interest from local authorities who are not able to run a pilot at an election in May 2019 because there are no local elections due to be held, but would like to provide their expertise as part of the Cabinet Office Pilot and Reference Group. This group was instrumental in advising all of the key partners. By being a member of this group, local authorities have a stake in how this future policy is formed.
- 5 We are seeking to encourage voting by improving the integrity of the voting system and voter confidence. We owe it to voters to ensure they know their voices are being heard and their right to vote is being protected. The impact of electoral fraud on voters can be significant and takes away their right to vote as they want – whether through intimidation, bribery or by impersonating someone and casting their vote. These are not victimless crimes. No level of electoral crime should be accepted when we have the ability to tackle it.
- 6 In his report into electoral fraud, (then) Sir Eric Pickles clearly identified tackling the potential for electoral fraud as a key part of wider improvement to the integrity of elections and democracy. He recommended that the Government should consider the options for electors to have to produce personal identification before voting at polling stations.
- 7 Northern Ireland has required paper ID at polling stations since 1985, and photo ID since 2003. It has proven to be effective at tackling fraud and not curtailed election turnout. Identification to vote has been backed by the Electoral Commission since 2014 as well as international election watchdogs. It has welcomed the voter ID pilots as a positive first step towards implementing its own recommendation that an accessible, proportionate voter identification scheme should be introduced in Great Britain.

- 6 Electoral Integrity Pilots – Prospectus 2018
- 8 At present, it is harder to take out a library book or collect a parcel at a post office than it is to vote in someone else’s name.
- 9 If you are interested in talking to us about any aspect of electoral integrity please do not hesitate to get in touch.
- 10 When you submit an expression of interest in piloting we can begin working together on how to deliver voter ID successfully. This is not a binding commitment should circumstances change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For pilot scheme enquiries and expressions of interest, please contact...

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1.2 Why should you pilot?

- 1 Taking part in this pilot will provide a number of benefits for improving the way elections are run. The local authorities who participated in the 2018 pilots saw the benefit in being at the forefront of policy creation, working directly with central Government and having the opportunity to make sure introduction of voter ID works for them. Other benefits include:
 - a. The ability to test changes and innovations in a real world environment;
 - b. The facility for formal evaluation through undertaking testing in a controlled environment; and
 - c. The ability to ensure effective project management and delivery.
- 2 We received positive feedback from our partners following the pilots in May.

The Association of Electoral Administrators: “... Our members, and elections colleagues across the UK, have undertaken months of preparation and hard work to ensure that polls are run reliably, securely and accurately. A great job done by everyone involved.”

Swindon Borough Council: “The Government-funded trial of the use of voter ID in Swindon ran extremely smoothly overall and we estimate at this stage that turnout is up on comparable previous years by around six per cent to 40 percent.”

Returning Officer, Woking Borough Council: “Given that 99.73% of voters brought a correct form of ID and engaged positively with the pilot and only 0.27% did not, I think we can call this trial a great success.”

“I would like to thank Woking’s electorate for their cooperation and understanding throughout the trial. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of all members of polling station staff and Council officers in the lead up to the election, and on the day, to make the new process such a success.”

“Following our experiences in the polling stations on 3 May, I see no reason why bringing ID to vote cannot be embedded in our democratic process and have already expressed my desire to the Cabinet Office that Woking continues to participate in any future trials. Like all pilot projects, the main purpose of the Voter ID trial was to stress-test the idea for viability and, as was wholly expected, there were some minor administrative issues encountered which we will need to address”

“As well as the Cabinet Office and EC’s formal evaluation, Officers will engage, as normal, with Members and political parties, through the Council’s Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel, to explore what improvements could be made in future years.”

- 3 The Cabinet Office ensures that local authorities can lawfully participate in the pilots through the Representation of the People Act 2000, which makes provision for local authorities to submit proposals to pilot innovative electoral administration practices at local government elections.

Chapter 2 - Objectives

2.1 Wider Objectives

- 1 These electoral administration pilot schemes are an integral part of the wider Government agenda to deliver a clear and secure democracy. Sir Eric Pickles' review into electoral fraud identified a number of areas in which processes could be improved to ensure the integrity of elections and reduce perceptions that those processes are being subverted. His research particularly highlighted the matter of voter ID requirements and argued that by not requiring proof of identity in polling stations, we exposed ourselves to the risk of personation.
- 2 Accordingly, the Government wishes to see in place systems that can mitigate risks to the integrity of our electoral processes and address the perception of voter fraud. If voters have confidence in the integrity of the electoral system then they are more likely to participate in that process.
- 3 Electoral processes must be accessible, to make sure that every person who is entitled to vote is able to exercise that right. They must also be robust so that we can ensure high levels of security and maintain high levels of confidence. Through pilot schemes we can ensure new practices are in-keeping with these requirements.

2.2 Pilot Objectives for 2019

- 1 Voter ID pilots at next year's local elections would enable the three models trialled this year to be refined, and implemented in different areas and with new partners, providing additional evidence and experience in preparation for national roll out.
- 2 We are looking to take forward pilots in authorities representing a diverse range of relevant socio-economic and demographic conditions and different types of areas (e.g. metropolitan, rural, urban). We would also encourage applications from authorities that have a history of electoral fraud.

Chapter 3 - Summary of Pilots in 2018

3.1 Voter ID Pilots

- 1 Voter ID was successfully tested at the local elections on 3 May this year in Bromley, Gosport, Swindon, Watford and Woking. The pilot authorities each chose their preference for the form and combination of ID. No electors needed to purchase identification documents to be able to vote in these pilots. Local authorities provided alternative methods, free of charge, to ensure that everyone who was registered had the opportunity to vote.
- 2 Our evaluation showed that the overwhelming majority of electors who turned up to vote did so with the right documents and had confidence in knowing how to cast their vote. Public opinion surveys in all of the pilot authorities show that the main reason for not voting was similar to that in non-pilot areas - that people were too busy or had other commitments. There was no indication that the ID requirement impacted the intention to vote for any consistent specific demographic group across the pilot authorities. Indeed, in some areas the number of people who voted rose, or was at a similar level to comparable local elections.
- 3 Voters' views of election day were largely positive across all of the pilots as were that of polling station staff. When surveyed, polling station staff across the pilot authorities agreed or strongly agreed that they had successfully delivered the ID requirements in their polling stations (99% of cases in Woking, Bromley, Gosport, and Swindon, 97% of cases in Watford) and that most of the pilot requirements were able to be delivered in conjunction with business as usual activities for an election.

3.2 Postal and Proxy Vote Pilots

- 1 The Government also made a manifesto commitment to reform postal voting and is working to make the process even more robust. Therefore, at the May local elections, separately to the voter ID pilots, three local authorities - Tower Hamlets, Slough and Peterborough - piloted measures to improve the integrity of the postal vote process. Proxy voters in Peterborough were also required to show ID before they could vote.
- 2 The piloting authorities conducted random sampling to verify the issue and return of postal votes throughout the postal vote process. Applicants were also given more information about electoral integrity and the secrecy of the ballot, and who to contact if they suspect fraudulent activity. The authorities noted that there was value in the pilot as an elector engagement exercise, given the positive feedback they received from electors in reaction to being contacted.
- 3 The Cabinet Office, in partnership with the independent Electoral Commission and Crimestoppers, also launched the “**Your Vote is Yours Alone**” campaign designed to empower electors to recognise and report voter fraud.

Chapter 4 - Pilot Delivery

4.1 Policy Implementation

- 1 Where the measures are piloted, all electors will be requested to present some form of ID. **When an elector or proxy voter is unable to present this ID, they will be refused a ballot paper and unable to vote unless they later return with the correct ID.** We found on 3 May 2018 that the majority of electors who returned to vote, returned with the right form of ID.
- 2 The results from the pilots on 3 May show that the local awareness campaigns in all of the five pilot areas to prepare the public were effective in making voters aware of the change. It will therefore be important for future participating authorities to develop equality impact assessments and effective strategies for communicating the requirements to electors, to ensure the advancement of equality between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not. This awareness raising work will be carried out in collaboration with Cabinet Office Communications who will work with the local authorities' communications and electoral services teams to develop public awareness campaigns. Each local authority will draw on local audience insight to develop plans across digital, press, advertising and stakeholder engagement.
- 3 Authorities will need to fully identify all potential impacts on each of the protected groups and/or provide sufficient mitigation for any adverse impact identified throughout the design and delivery of the pilots.

4.2 ID Requirements

- 1 The Government remains aware that not all types of identification are universally held by individuals who are eligible to vote in polls in the UK and it is essential that we maintain the accessibility of the polls. At the same time, we must enhance voters' confidence in the system in which they are participating on polling day. The types of ID we are testing through these pilots will aim to balance these two requirements.
- 2 The types of ID that the Government is interested in testing will be for each pilot one of the following: photographic ID, a combination of photographic and non-photographic ID or poll cards whether or not enabled by additional technology.
- 3 Any elector unable to produce the required identification must have the option to apply to their Returning Officer for a locally produced document that satisfies the voter ID requirement and which will be issued to the elector free of charge.
- 4 More detail on the ID requirements for the 2019 pilots will be provided during the formal application period.

4.3 Funding

- 1 Funding for the net additional costs of piloting will be provided by the Cabinet Office. If there are any savings that accrue from a change of process under a pilot, these should be used to offset the additional costs in order to ensure effective value for money in delivery of the elections overall.

Chapter 5 - Application Process

5.1 Expression of Interest

- 1 Local authorities who wish to pilot voter ID or any aspect of electoral integrity at local government elections in May 2019 should express their interest in writing to **Mark Hughes, Head of Elections Projects, at mark.hughes@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or farha.patel@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**. You may also contact the **Elections Projects mailbox, at elections.projects@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**. This will allow us to work with interested authorities to develop realistic research criteria and practical delivery plans.
- 2 Those who do not submit an expression of interest will still be welcome to submit a formal application. However, early involvement will allow us to take on board your views when developing our research proposals. At this stage, no commitment to participation is required. Submitting an expression of interest does not guarantee selection; neither does it commit you to participation.

5.2 Formal Application

- 1 There will be a requirement for formal application from the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive or Returning Officer. We anticipate formal applications by **10 September 2018**. Authorities should only submit a formal application if they are committed to participating and if they meet criteria set out in the next section.
- 2 These formal applications will be agreed by the Cabinet Office Electoral Integrity Project Board which includes representatives from the Electoral Commission and the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA). The decision to approve pilots rests with the Minister for the Constitution, who is obliged by law to consider any application from a local authority under section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. As part of the Minister's consideration, she will need to be satisfied that you meet the criteria outlined in the next section.
- 3 We will share our learning and experience from previous pilots with you as you develop your proposals and we will work closely with successful areas in planning and delivering successful schemes.

Chapter 6 - Criteria for piloting authorities

6.1 Criteria for piloting authorities

- 1 Authorities should only submit an expression of interest or formal application for piloting if they meet, or expect to meet, the requirements outlined below.
- 2 Any local authority wishing to pilot should be able to demonstrate the following:
 - a. An understanding of the Government’s objectives for the project and how the pilot fits with these objectives;
 - b. The feasibility of delivering the pilot within the available time frame;
 - c. An ongoing assessment of equality considerations in the design and delivery of the pilots; identifying all potential impacts on each of the protected groups and/or provide sufficient mitigation for any adverse impact;
 - d. There are effective planning management arrangements in place and sufficient resources and capacity in the local authority to deliver the pilot, including availability of staff after the election to contribute to the evaluation process;
 - e. Any management of software suppliers;
 - f. An understanding of the contingencies you need to have in place – particularly to protect the security and integrity of the election;
 - g. A clear and comprehensive communications plan covering all stakeholders;
 - h. The evaluation process will be fully supported;
 - i. The pilot has an effective business case and offers value for money;
 - j. There is a clear means of testing the impact of the innovation;
 - k. Any innovation is at least as secure as conventional electoral practices;
 - l. The pilot will maintain public confidence in the electoral process, that key risks and issues have been identified, and that a plan has been drawn up for managing them; and
 - m. Digital capability (where applicable).

Chapter 7 - Pilot Legislation

7.1 Statutory Orders

- 1 Once the successful pilot scheme applications have been selected, Statutory Orders must be made for each of the pilot areas. These amend the current legislation for the particular election and must reflect the exact nature of the innovation for the pilot to be legally compliant.
- 2 Experience has shown that the preparation of these Orders takes time and requires intensive work from both local authorities and Cabinet Office officials. Relevant officers in the local authority will be expected to fully contribute to the policy development of the scheme which will be implemented through the Statutory Order.
- 3 Failure to prepare an Order in good time, which includes providing sufficient time for the Electoral Commission to carry out their statutory consideration of draft Orders, would mean that a pilot scheme cannot proceed.
- 4 The Orders for the voter ID pilots and postal and proxy vote pilots that took place in 2018 can be found on gov.uk:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-id-pilots>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/postal-and-proxy-vote-pilot-schemes>

7.2 Evaluation

- 1 The Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to evaluate every electoral pilot scheme, and report its findings within three months of the election. The Electoral Commission's statutory evaluation and assessment criteria are outlined in section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. Cabinet Office will work with the Electoral Commission to ensure the pilots satisfy all the evaluation criteria and that the criteria are publicly available once applications have been approved.
- 2 In order to enable full and effective evaluation of pilot schemes, local authorities and their suppliers will, subject to data protection legislation, be required to provide the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office with assistance during the preparation and delivery of the pilot scheme, including:
 - a. Access to data and information, including current and historic turnout data, project information and background information;
 - b. Access to cost data to allow an assessment of value for money;
 - c. Access to key project personnel; and
 - d. Where appropriate, access to polling stations and the count.
- 3 The Electoral Commission and the Cabinet Office recognise this is a significant undertaking for local authorities, and will work alongside local authorities in evaluating pilot schemes.

- 4 In addition, organisations acting on behalf of the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office may make some information requests of pilot authorities. As in previous pilots, it is likely that the Electoral Commission and Cabinet Office will undertake or contract others to undertake:
- a. An assessment of the accessibility of pilot schemes;
 - b. A review of the operation of any technical components of pilot schemes; and
 - c. Public opinion research.

Chapter 8 – Provisional timetable

2018	
10 September	Deadline for submitting pilot scheme expressions of interest and formal applications
By 17 September	Prospective pilot areas notified of decision
September - October	Meetings with successful pilot areas Drafting of Statutory Orders
October - November	Consultation with the pilot authorities, Electoral Commission, the AEA and SOLACE on Statutory Orders Statutory Orders finalised and approved
2019	
2 May	Pilot schemes run at local elections in England
May - August	Evaluation of pilots
August	Electoral Commission publishes statutory evaluation reports

Chapter 9 - Additional Information

9.1 Statutory Orders

- 1 The powers to make the pilot scheme orders are set out in The Representation of the People Act 2000, s 10, at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/2/section/10>
- 2 The statutory criteria for the Electoral Commission’s evaluation of the pilots are also set out in The Representation of the People Act 2000, s 10, subsections (6) to (10).
- 3 The enabling Pilot Orders setting out how the conduct rules for the running of local elections in May 2018 were changed to accommodate the voter ID pilots: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voter-id-pilots>
- 4 The enabling Orders making the necessary changes to the conduct rules to accommodate each local authorities’ individual postal and proxy vote pilot: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/postal-and-proxy-vote-pilot-schemes>

9.2 Reports

- 1 The following reports provide background on voter ID at polling stations and on the wider on-going work on electoral integrity:
 - a) Electoral Commission, evaluation of May 2018 voter identification pilot schemes <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/electoral-fraud/voter-identification-pilot-schemes>
 - b) The Government’s evaluation of pilots at the 2018 local elections to test the impact of voter ID and improvements to the postal vote process. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electoral-integrity-project-local-elections-2018-evaluation>
 - c) A Democracy that Works for Everyone: A Clear and Secure Democracy, Government Response to Sir Eric Pickles’ Review of Electoral Fraud <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-democracy-that-works-for-everyone-a-clear-and-secure-democracy>
 - d) Securing the Ballot, Report of Sir Eric Pickles’ Review into Electoral Fraud <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/securing-the-ballot-review-into-electoral-fraud>
 - e) Electoral Commission, Statement on Sir Eric Pickles’ Review of Electoral Fraud <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/journalist/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-corporate/electoral-commission-statement-on-sir-eric-pickles-review-of-electoral-fraud>
 - f) House of Commons Library, Electoral Fraud since 2010 Research Briefing <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06255>



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