

Motion on Notice – Voter ID Pilots

To be proposed by Councillor O'Dwyer-Henry, seconded by Councillors Lewis, Reynolds and Wood.

This Council notes that:

- *Of the 44.6 million votes cast in UK elections in 2017, there was just one conviction resulting from the 28 allegations of in-person voter fraud.*
- *After the May 2018 Voter ID pilots, the Electoral Reform Society concluded that the introduction of Voter ID is “a sledge hammer to crack a nut”.*
- *In 2018, Electoral Commission research found that about 7.5% of the electorate do not have access to any form of photo ID.*
- *That young people, older people, people with disabilities, trans people, BAME communities and the homeless would especially be negatively impacted by a requirement to produce photo ID to cast a vote.*
- *Over 1,100 people have been denied a vote in local government elections due to the 2018 and 2019 Voter ID pilots.*

This Council believes that introducing mandatory Voter ID would undermine our democracy.

Therefore, this Council resolves to not participate in any Voter ID pilots for any elections in our District.

And this Council further resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Cabinet Office to express this Council's opposition to the introduction of mandatory Voter ID in any UK elections.

Officer Briefing Note

Voters at polling stations in Great Britain do not need to show ID to vote. At the May 2019 local elections, the UK Government asked for volunteers amongst Returning Officers, to run pilots to test requiring people to show ID at polling stations.

Ten areas agreed to run pilots:

- in two areas, people had to show a specified form of photo ID;
- in five areas, they could choose to show either a specified form of photo ID or two pieces of specified non-photo ID; and
- in three areas people could show either their poll card or a specified form of photo ID.

Pendle was the only Lancashire Authority which took part in the 2019 pilot. Lancaster City Council did not volunteer.

The Returning Officer has received no information or communication to suggest that further pilot schemes are anticipated. In July 2019, Cabinet office published an evaluation of its 2019 Voter ID pilot, link below, stating that “Ministers will consider this evidence in their decisions for national rollout of an ID requirement.”

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819404/2019_Voter_ID_Pilots_Evaluation.pdf

STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

The **Deputy Monitoring Officer** drafted this briefing note in her role as Democratic Services Manager.

The **Section 151 Officer** has been consulted and has no comments.

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