

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance)	Executive Cabinet	15 August 2013

## INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To outline the details surrounding the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and the processes and timescales involved in the transition.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the contents of the report are noted.
- That the Executive Member (Resources, Policy and Performance) be granted delegated authority to agree any additional funding for resources necessary for the implementation of IER as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Electoral Registration and Administration Act received Royal Assent in January 2013. It introduces a fundamental change to the way we register to vote, by introducing Individual Electoral Registration (IER).
- Each Local Authority Electoral Registration Officer is required to implement the new arrangements before the 2015 UK Parliamentary Election.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Reason</b> Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	<b>4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards</b>

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

#### (If the recommendations are accepted)

- To facilitate the full transition to IER in line with the legislation timescales.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7. There are no alternatives as the Council is legally obliged to adopt the provisions as set out in the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	√	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

## CHANGES TO ELECTOR REGISTRATION

9. The introduction of IER will be the biggest change to the voter registration process since the universal franchise was introduced. At present, one person in every household is responsible for registering everyone else who lives at that address.
10. Under the new system, individuals would be asked to provide “identifying information”, such as a name, address, National Insurance Number and date of birth which will be cross-checked with the Department of Work and Pensions before names are added to the register. An individual unable to provide their date of birth or National Insurance Number will be required to explain why they cannot do so, and to provide alternative evidence. At present this may take the form of a passport or ID, or attestation from a person of “good standing”. Other options may be adopted in the future.
11. Once registered, individuals need only confirm annually, that their details have not changed.
12. An individual who has been required to register and fails to do so will receive a second and third notice before a penalty arises. This will be a civil penalty (comparable in amount to a parking fine) for a failure to register.
13. The transition to individual registration will commence in July 2014. A full IER Electoral Register will be published on 1 December 2014 and by January 2016 the transition will be complete.
14. People who fail to register under the new system in 2014 would have their registration carried forward to 2015 ensuring that they would be registered to vote at the 2015 UK general election. However, postal or proxy voters would need to register under the new system from 2014 or they would automatically lose the right to use this method of voting. Anyone who has moved house or changed their name would also be required to register under the new system.
15. People who have not moved house or do not require a postal or proxy vote will have until the end of the autumn 2015 annual canvass to register under the new system. Those who have not registered individually and had their identity verified by then would be removed from the register.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF IER

16. The implementation of IER falls into five key stages. Alongside this work the Electoral Registration Officers and Administrators will continue their work to run elections and carry out other related activities, including the normal canvass process.

The key elements of the process include:

- 2012 – 13 : Designing, building and testing the new system;
- July – Dec 2014: Following European elections, transitional phase begins with the confirmation of existing electors through data matching against information held by DWP, and letters sent to those not confirmed by data-matching inviting applications for registration.
- Dec 2014: New register comprises all electors confirmed by data matching, all those who have made successful individual applications, and those on spring 2014 register who have not yet reapplied and are carried forward.
- To March 2015: Completion of the transition, with targeted activity prior to March inviting further missing electors and encouraging applications. May General Election.
- Autumn 2015: Full household canvass. Every household confirms who lives there, anyone new invited to register individually. Re-canvass of electors carried forward from March 2014 canvass who were not confirmed by data-matching and have not self-registered – names removed from register in December 2015 of those who do not then re-apply. (This removal of non-individually registered electors may lead to lower overall levels of registration than at present). Possibility of final canvass being extended to autumn 2016 should insufficient progress have been made at this point.
- 2016: New system in place – all new electors and those moving home will be required to register individually. There will be an annual household canvass to ensure the register is up to date.

Over summer 2013, a dry run of electoral registers against the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data base will allow the Council to identify particular issues it faces in creating a full and accurate local register, and will be used to identify any resource implications. Information from this will also be used to determine future funding allocations.

17. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act came into force in January 2013 and aims to modernise and improve the electoral registration system. It seeks to provide better protection against electoral fraud and make it more convenient for eligible citizens to register a vote by introducing Individual Electoral Registration

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

18. The Government has confirmed that £108M has been set aside for the implementation of IER. Local authorities will receive funding directly through grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to meet the costs of transition to Individual Registration and will be paid separately to revenue support grant. Following implementation, there will be other associated costs in respect of the maintenance of systems; scanning equipment, printing and postage costs but there will be no additional funding to cover these.
19. There will be a substantial increase in the workload of Electoral Services. It is anticipated that additional temporary staff will be required during the transition period to deal with the processing of forms and dealing with an increase in the number of queries. The Electoral Commission is also expected to provide guidance on how best to reach those who are least

likely to be registered or to respond to the change. Electoral Services will need to give consideration as to what measures will be most suitable to encourage registration and under-registration, which may involve input from the Council's Communications Section.

19. The Cabinet Office has produced a Digital Design and Delivery Project, to provide a service to support the implementation of IER. This will be funded centrally from the £108M budget.
20. A Member's Learning Hour session will be held on this subject in the autumn of 2013.

### IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	√
Legal	√	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	√

### COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. It is unclear at the moment how much funding the Council will receive. Once known I will report back to the Executive Cabinet on the resourcing and financial implications of these arrangements for the Council.

### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

23. There are no comments from the Monitoring Officer

GARY HALL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013	Feb. 2013		<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/6/contents/enacted">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/6/contents/enacted</a>

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Phil Davies	5131	12 June 2013	***