

## COST AND IMPACT OF VOTER ID LEGISLATION ON THE COUNCIL

### Report of the Assistant Director - Legal & Democratic Governance

#### 1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 As part of the Elections Act 2022 voters in England now need to show acceptable photo ID at polling stations. This applied to Stockport Council's recent all-out elections and from October 2023 it will apply to UK General elections.

1.2 The council meeting on 30 March 2023 resolved to:-

1.2.1 *utilise all existing channels and means of communication to supplement the publicity campaign by the Electoral Commission to make more voters aware of the need to show photo ID at polling stations in the May 2023 local elections and beyond; and*

1.2.2 *bring a report to the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee, on the cost and impact this unnecessary legislation has had on Stockport.*

1.3 This report is in response to that motion.

#### 2. COST OF IMPLEMENTING VOTER ID

2.1 Below is a table of identifiable costs incurred as a direct consequence of the introduction and implementation of Voter ID.

Item	Cost	Notes
<b>Privacy Screens</b>	£8,040	180 privacy screens for use at polling stations
<b>Handheld mirrors</b>	£270	For use by voters at polling stations using privacy screened areas to replace head coverings etc
<b>1 x additional member of the Electoral Services Team</b>	£26,600 (including on-costs)	12-month temporary post at Scale 2 – funded by grant (see below)
<b>Council Tax Bill mailing</b>	£1,000	Additional page in the annual council tax bill statement regarding Voter ID
<b>Additional Poll Clerks and</b>	£27,730	We recruited an additional 130 poll clerks as a result of the Electoral

increase in poll clerk at polling stations		Commission revising their recommended staffing ratios due to Voter ID.  Pay was increased by £15 for all poll clerks to reflect their new responsibilities as a result of Voter ID
British Sign Language translation services	£37.50	Voter ID video with Walthew House
Training for Returning Officer staff	£397	Cost of training for 3 members of the Elections Team on delivering Voter ID (provided by the AEA)
Poll Cards	£4,187.35	This is the increase in printing charge for 2023 versus 2022 to represent the new larger poll card.
Additional postage costs	£20,000 to £25,000	This is the estimated increase in postage costs since 2022 due to the size of the cards. The total increase was £25,517.66 but it is difficult to confirm how much of this was solely due to increase size and not postage increases, so the above is an estimate.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£88,262 to £93,262</b>	

2.2 There will be further costs that were incurred but which are more difficult to identify – these specifically relate to additional officer time spent by existing senior officers in the Elections Team (in addition to the scale 2 post which was specifically recruited to deal with application for Voter ID certificates) in learning about and advising on Voter ID requirements. Additional time was also incurred by the officers in the HR and OD team who provided specific training to colleagues on Voter ID requirements and officers in the communications team who undertook our communications plan for us.

2.3 Future costs under the above headings will be incurred for some time as and when any further elections and by-elections take place until the requirement for Voter ID becomes part of the way a resident votes.

2.4 All local authorities received a grant to mitigate the costs involved in implementing Voter ID requirements. Stockport received £47,000 in grant funding towards the costs incurred by Voter ID.

### 3. IMPACT ON ABILITY TO VOTE

- 3.1 We received 478 applications for Voter Authority Certificates. Eleven of these applications were received in hard copy paper format with the remainder applied for online. The number of applications was much lower than anticipated; based on the Electoral Commission's estimations, we were expecting to receive around 4000 applications. The amount of applications received by the council appears to be in line with the number of applications received across other Greater Manchester authorities.
- 3.2 On polling day 459 residents attending polling stations without the appropriate ID. 257 of those returned with the appropriate ID. The remaining 190 residents were unable to vote as they did not have the correct identification with them. We are unable to say how many voters chose not to vote because of the Voter ID requirements or those who decided to turn away from the polling station without registering that they had not brought the correct ID and chose not come back to the polling station.
- 3.3 It does not appear that Voter ID there was any significant impact on turnout although it should be borne in mind that turnout may have been higher due to it being an all-out election. Turnout was 35% for 2023, 36% in 2022 and 40% in 2021 (this was a combined election with the GM Mayoral Election).

#### **4. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 See above.

#### **5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

#### **6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 6.1 None.

#### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1 None.

#### **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 8.1 None.

#### **9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To note the report.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Vicki Bates on Tel: 0161 474 3219 or by email on [vicki.bates@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:vicki.bates@stockport.gov.uk)