

UPDATE ON IMPACT OF VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS IN ELECTIONS**Report of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance****1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the Voter ID requirements in relation to the number of residents unable to vote in the three elections which took place in 2024; namely the Local Elections and GM Combined Authority Mayoral Election in May 2024 and the Parliamentary Election in 2024.
- 1.2 By way of recap, the Voter ID requirements were brought in as part of the Elections Act 2022 so that voters in England now need to show acceptable photo identification at polling stations when voting.
- 1.3 Following the May 2023 all-out Local Elections, a report was submitted to the Committee on the impact of the legislation on the council. A similar report was requested for the May 2024 Local and GM Combined Authority Mayoral Elections. With the announcement of the general election on 4 July 2024, this was superseded and a report has accordingly been produced outlining the impact at both the May and July elections in 2024.
- 1.4 In summary, this report sets out that there has been a reduction in the percentage of voters unable to vote because they did not have the correct identification.

2. IMPACT ON ABILITY TO VOTE

- 2.1 Under the Elections Act it was a legal requirement that for the May 2023 elections Returning Officers record the numbers of people turned away and unable to vote because of Voter ID regulations. Additionally, it was a requirement that the same information be recorded at the polling station for the first two general elections held under the Voter ID requirement. However, it was not a legal requirement to do so for the May 2024 local elections.
- 2.2 Stockport made the decision to continue to record that information, but other authorities, including in Greater Manchester, will not have done so, limiting what comparisons can be made. From the 2023 comparisons, the number of electors unable to vote in Stockport was in line with the rest of Greater Manchester once electorate and turnout were accounted for (Stockport having the 3rd highest electorate and second highest turnout at those elections Greater Manchester).
- 2.3 As always, information about the need to present photographic ID and the types of acceptable ID were included on the poll card and could also be found on the Council website. Council social media comms reflected the need to bring photo ID and so did national campaigns from the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Services team also undertook specific outreach work with some of our communities who may have been more affected by the new legislation and continue to do so.

2.4 The table below outlines the statistics for the three borough-wide elections held under Voter ID rules.

	May 2023 all-out local elections	May 2024 local & mayoral elections	July 2024 UK general election
Total number of polling station electors who applied for, but initially were not issued with, a ballot paper	459	388	396
Total number of polling station electors who were not issued with a ballot paper and who later returned with accepted ID and were issued with a ballot paper	269	248	270
The number of polling station electors who applied for but were not issued with a ballot paper by close of poll	190	140	126
Contextual Information			
Total number of electors eligible to vote in person at the polling stations	183,167	183,974	180,524
Total number of voters issued with a ballot paper at polling stations	51,398	56,141	105,631
Percentage of electors eligible to vote in person at the polling stations who voted	28.1%	30.5%	58.5%
Proportions (of those who tried to vote in a polling station)			
% attended the polling station and were able to vote on 4 July	99.6%	99.8%	99.9%
% who applied for but were refused a ballot paper by the close of poll	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%
% of electors who applied for, but were initially refused, a ballot paper	0.9%	0.7%	0.4%
Of the electors initially refused a ballot paper, the percentage who later returned with accepted ID and were issued with a ballot paper	58.6%	63.9%	68.2%

2.5 The data above sets out the number of residents unable to vote that attended the polling stations. We are unaware of the number of voters who did not attend a polling station as they did not have the appropriate ID to vote.

2.6 The council issued the following number of Voter Authority Certificates (VAC) in advance of each of the above elections. It should be noted that a Voter Authority Certificate lasts for 10 years and a new one is not needed for each different election:

Elections	Number of VAC applications approved	Timeframe
2023 Local Elections	403	Service commencement to application deadline of 5pm Tuesday 25 th April 2023
2024 Local/Mayoral Elections	253	26 th April 2023 to application deadline at 5pm Wednesday 24 th April 2024
2024 General Election	190	Date the election was called on 22 May 2024 to the application deadline on 5pm Wednesday 26 th June 2024
Total Approved	846	

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council will continue its outreach work to seek engage with those residents who are unable to vote as they do not have the correct identification to further promote the free Voter Authority Certificate which the council can provide on behalf of the Returning Officer.

3.2 The Committee is asked to comment and 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 telephone number Tel: 0161 474 3219 or alternatively email vicki.bates@stockport.gov.uk