

Motion re: Elections Act (2022) and Voter-ID Proposals.

Proposers: Cllr Paul Follows, Cllr Peter Clark

Seconders: Cllr Steve Williams, Cllr Nick Palmer, Cllr Maxine Gale

Waverley Borough Council ('the Council') recognises the importance of ensuring that elections are fair and accessible for all voters, and notes:

- that the council, as the relevant electoral authority, has a duty to comment on this area of national policy.
- that the proposed voter ID elements of the Elections Act (2022) will result in major changes to national elections, including the introduction of compulsory photographic ID in order to vote.
- that these changes are estimated to cost the taxpayer £180 million and will create unnecessary bureaucracy for local authorities.
- with concern that currently 3.5 million people in the UK do not have any form of photographic ID, and that photographic ID is expensive.
- that electoral fraud is (locally and nationally) extremely low and does not warrant such a disproportionate policy response.
- that the Elections Act (2022) takes no account of postal vote fraud.
- that the forms of acceptable ID are disproportionately weighted to over 60's and there are fewer and more expensive forms of ID valid for young people.
- in some cases, the young person's version of an ID document has been disallowed, while the older person's version of the same ID document is considered valid.

Waverley Borough Council believes that the proposed changes will act as a barrier to some residents from voting. This will disenfranchise residents and increase inequality of access to the electoral process. This is despite almost zero incidences of electoral fraud. The Council further believes that at a time when voter turnout is declining, we should be doing all we can to make it easier, not harder for people to vote.

Waverley Borough Council does not want to see residents being turned away at the ballot box because of these changes, and resolves to:

1. Write to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, expressing our concerns and highlighting the statistics on the low incidence of electoral fraud, calling specifically for a review of the permitted ID types, and seeking urgent clarification as to how any changes will be funded in the short, medium and long term and how these changes will be communicated to the electorate before May 2023.
2. Write to the MPs covering the Waverley Borough Council area (Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP and Angela Richardson MP) requesting that these concerns are raised in parliament and that they indicate their views regarding the content of the bill.
3. Communicate the views and evidence expressed in this motion and the supporting statistics on the low incidence of electoral fraud using council media and communication channels.
4. Engage with local schools, colleges, and places of further education to raise awareness of the proposed changes and encourage the electorate to apply for suitable ID in a timely fashion.

Background Information for Members:

1. General background information for members:

- a. UK Parliament, Elections Act 2022: <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3020>
- b. Electoral Commission: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/elections-act>
- c. House of Commons Library: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9187/>

2. Is there a national, electoral fraud problem that requires a solution?

Source:

Electoral Reform Society: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/campaigns/voter-id/>

	2015	2017	2018	2019
Votes cast without allegations of fraud	51,400,000	44,400,000	8,000,000	58,000,000
Allegations of in-person fraud	26	28	8	34

3. Is there a local, electoral fraud problem that requires a solution?

Source:

Waverley Borough Council Electoral Services Team / Joint Chief Executive of Waverley and Guildford Borough Council (as Returning Officer).

There have been **ZERO (0)** instances of in-person electoral fraud in Waverley since 2018.

ONE (1) instance of postal-vote fraud was reported to the police by the returning officer in May 2021.

4. What are the acceptable forms of ID proposed by the government?

Source:

Electoral Reform Society: <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/voter-id-that-you-can-use-in-uk-elections-and-how-to-get-it/>

ID Type	Cost	Eligibility	Renewal Every
UK Passport	£75.50	16+	10 Years
UK driving licence	New: £34 – £43 Renewal: £14 – 21.50	15y 9m+	10 Years
A PASS card bearing the PASS hologram	£15	All	
Defence Identity Card	N/A	Armed Forces	
A biometric immigration document	Upwards of £19.20	Immigrant	
Blue Badge scheme card	Wales: £0 England & Northern	Disabled	3 Years

ID Type	Cost	Eligibility	Renewal Every
	Ireland:£10 Scotland: £20		
Oyster 60+ (London)	New: £20 Renewal: £10	60+	1 Year
Freedom Pass (London)	New: Free Replacement: £12	67+	
Disabled Person’s Freedom Pass (London)	Free	Disabled	
Older Person’s Bus Pass funded by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme	Free	60-68 (Pension age)	
Scottish National Entitlement Card	Free	5+	
Older Person’s Welsh Concessionary Travel Card	Free	60+	
Disabled Person’s Welsh Concessionary Travel Card	Free	60+	
Electoral Identity Card (Northern Ireland)	Free	All	
Senior SmartPass (Northern Ireland)	Free	65+	5 Years
Registered Blind SmartPass (Northern Ireland)	Free	Disabled	5 Years
War Disablement SmartPass (Northern Ireland)	Free	Disabled	5 Years
60+ SmartPass (Northern Ireland)	Free	60	5 Years
Half Fare SmartPass (Northern Ireland)	Free	Disabled	5 Years
National identity card issued by an EEA state	Varies	Varies	Varies
Commonwealth or EEA passport	Varies	16+	Varies
Channel Islands, Isle of Man or an EEA driving licence	Varies	15y 9m+	10 Years

Below is an example of the same type of ID having different validity for different age groups with no reason given to explain this.

