



Doncaster Council

Agenda

To all Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Notice is given that a Meeting of the above Committee is to be held as follows:

Venue: Council Chamber, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU

Date: Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022

Time: 10.00 a.m.

BROADCASTING NOTICE

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Items for Discussion:

Page No.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.

Damian Allen
Chief Executive

Issued on: Monday 14th November 2022

Governance Services Officer for this meeting: Jonathan Goodrum
Tel. 01302 736709

Items for Discussion:**Page No.**

3. Declarations of Interest, if any.
4. Minutes of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee Meeting held on 12th July 2022. 1 - 4
- A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.**
5. Elections Update. 5 - 10
6. Canvass Update. 11 - 18
7. 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review Proposals. 19 - 26
8. Elections Act 2022. 27 - 38

MEMBERS OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE (11)**Chair** – Councillor Julie Grace**Vice-Chair** – Councillor Nick Allen

Councillor Duncan Anderson	Councillor James Church
Councillor Gemma Cobby	Councillor Debbie Hutchinson
Councillor Jake Kearsley	Councillor Majid Khan
Councillor Emma Muddiman-Rawlins	Councillor Thomas Noon
Councillor Andy Pickering	

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4.

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 12TH JULY, 2022

A MEETING of the ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU on TUESDAY, 12TH JULY, 2022, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Julie Grace
Vice-Chair - Councillor Nick Allen

Councillors James Church, Gemma Cobby, Emma Muddiman-Rawlins, Thomas Noon and Andy Pickering

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Duncan Anderson, Debbie Hutchinson, Jake Kearsley and Majid Khan

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th February, 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 2022 ELECTION RESULTS

The Committee received a report introduced by Scott Fawcus, Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services providing detailed information and results of the following elections, By-Elections and Referendums:

- Rossington Neighbourhood Planning Referendum held on 17 March, 2022.
- High Melton Parish Council By-Election held on 17 March 2022.
- Wheatley Hills and Intake ward By-Election held on 31 May 2022.
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (previously known as Sheffield City Region) held on 5 May 2022.

Following the update, officers answered a range of questions from Members including:-

In response to a question the Chair, Councillor Julie Grace raised regarding holding a number of elections on the same day, it was advised that it can be useful to combine polls but this was not always possible due to timescales.

With regard to the Rossington Neighbourhood Plan, Councillor Thomas Noon asked what the turnout was for a referendum. Officers advised that this tends to depend on the area, figures show that turnout was average hitting 10.9% however, some may be lower.

Councillor James Church asked whether there had been any issues raised by the public with regard to polling station changes. Members were advised that the Elections in 2021/22 there were a number of changes made with regard to polling stations, some of the third party stations had become inactivate and since Covid restrictions the team have tried not to use mobile stations. Officers advised that whilst no complaints had been sent to the team direct, a log book used by Inspectors on the day of elections was kept and any comments would be collated and used for the review of polling station exercise carried out by the team. It was suggested that if any member received any comments these could be passed to the team and fed into the process.

Further discussion took place with regard to polling stations and particular reference was made in relation to a station for Old Denaby, which was located on Church Street in Mexborough. Members were encouraged to share with the Elections team any local knowledge as to other available buildings which could be utilised as polling stations.

RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

4 ANNUAL CANVASS

The Committee received a report introduced by Scott Fawcus, Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services which provided an update of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and the preparation for the start of the Annual Canvass.

Following the update, Officers answered a number of questions including the following:-

In response to a question regarding costs for the canvass, Officers stated that this would depend on the responses received. A letter is sent to every property, costs are significantly reduced if the response rate is successful on the first contact, however costs can vary from year to year. It was also noted that the Annual Canvass was significantly more recognised by the electorate which had made the process more efficient and cheaper.

Members were also advised that more responses received at Route 1 stage through data matching would mean that costs were reduced as further canvass activities would not be required.

The Chair, Councillor Julie Grace sought clarification with regard to those nationalities who were unable to apply to go on the register and whether this effected the percentage of returns. It was advised that only UK, Ireland, Commonwealth and EU citizens were eligible to register, those nationalities such as Turkish are unable to register however, this would not affect the figures.

In terms of advertising, Councillor Noon asked whether further promotion could be carried out by using more social media platforms. Officers reported that the Communications Team undertake all the media advertisement and their thoughts were that Twitter would be the best media platform to use. It was suggested that Facebook

and other platforms were more directed to younger age groups. It was worth noting that there has been an uptake in all forms of registration and people seem to be more interested in registering particularly prior to elections.

In response to a question raised regarding relationships with social landlords, it was stated that this would be included in the communication process and following on from the earlier routes, a more targeted approach would be undertaken.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 22 November 2022

To: The Chair and Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Report Title: Elections Update

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	Hatfield Ward	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides members with detailed information and results from the Hatfield - Dunscroft Ward Town Council by-election which took place on Thursday 25 August 2022.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an exempt report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Election has taken place and this report is for information only.
4. The Committee is asked to note the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. Having accessible and well-organised elections and referendums are key to public engagement in the democratic process. Elections are the cornerstone of our democratic process and are important to all of our residents. Elections give the electorate the opportunity to hold politicians to account and shape the future direction of national and local government.

BACKGROUND

6. Elections are a significant project and by-elections are carried out by the small core Elections Team with the assistance of internal staff usually from within the Legal & Democratic Services department to work on polling stations.
7. Due to a resignation a vacancy occurred and was advertised for a Town Councillor in Hatfield for the Duncroft Ward. Doncaster Council received the necessary request from at least ten electors within the Duncroft area to fill the vacancy by holding an election.
8. The eligible electorate was 4,980 electors of which 1,375 were postal voters and of those, 400 postal votes (29.09%) were returned and personal identifiers correctly verified, a further 9 postal votes were rejected due to not containing a signature.
9. On polling day 72 (2%) electors cast their vote in the two polling stations, adding that to the postal voters gave a total of 472 ballot papers verified and a total turnout of 9.48%. 6 Ballot papers were rejected, 1 for voting for more than one Candidate and 5 rejected for being unmarked or void for uncertainty.
10. There were three candidates and Christopher Taylorson (commonly known as Chris Taylo) was duly elected Councillor for Hatfield Town Council – Duncroft Ward; a full breakdown of the results can be found below:

11. Results

Name of Candidate	Description (if any)	Number of Votes*
BEADLE Tim	Independent	71
MCVAY Rob	Independent	83
TAYLO Chris		312 elected

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more Candidates than voter was entitled to	1
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	5
Total	6

Electorate: 4,980	Ballot Papers Issued: 472	Turnout: 9.48 %
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NOMINATION UPDATE

12. On 9 November 2022 [The Local Elections \(Principal Areas\) \(England and Wales\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Rules 2022](#) reduce the number of subscribing electors that are required on a candidate nomination paper for elections of councillors of a principal area in England from ten to two, and substitute new

forms reflecting this change. These changes come into effect for elections and by-elections taking place on or after 4 May 2023 onwards.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED


13. Elections and Referendums are a statutory function and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.




REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

14. This report is primary for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

15.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 Tackling Climate Change				✓
Comments:				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
Comments:				
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
Comments:				
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓
Comments:				
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner				✓

communities where everyone belongs				
Comments:				
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
Comments:				
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
Comments:				
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Comments:				
Fair & Inclusive	✓			
<p>The Council has a duty to ensure Elections and Referendums are well managed to allow all eligible electors to freely vote by secret ballot ensuring freedom of expression and political debate by exercising their vote. The Council has worked hard to ensure that voting is accessible to all. A full Polling Places review was carried out in 2019 and full risk assessment reviews in 2021 to ensure all Polling Stations are compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. All Polling Stations were supplied with tactile voting devices, large print elections stationery and magnifiers to assist the visually impaired. Ramps were provided to ensure access by wheelchair users and those with mobility issues. Presiding Officers were given guidance at their training session and provided with a handbook on how to assist electors to vote in the unlikely event that they were unable to access the Polling Station. Electors are also able to apply for a Postal Vote if they were unable to attend a polling station. Electoral Services continually review arrangements and look to improve these where possible.</p>				

Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 11/11/2022]

16. The arrangements detailed in this report are designed to ensure compliance with a range of statutory duties including:

- Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006, 2014, 2018
- The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2014, 2015 and 2018
- Representation of the People Acts 1983, 1985 and 2000

Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 10/11/2022]

17. All costs associated with this By-election are claimed back from Hatfield Town Council.

Human Resources Implications

18. There are no Human Resources Implications arising from this report.

Technology Implications

19. There are no Technology Implications arising from this report.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

20. Ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to deliver well-run elections improve our reputation and meeting the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards.

CONSULTATION

21. Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. Declaration of results and count paperwork.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

23. Not applicable

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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Damian Allen

Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 22 November 2022

To: The Chair and Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Report Title: Canvass Update

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on a number of key work streams being undertaken by the Electoral Services Team in relation to the Register of Electors and the Annual Canvass.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

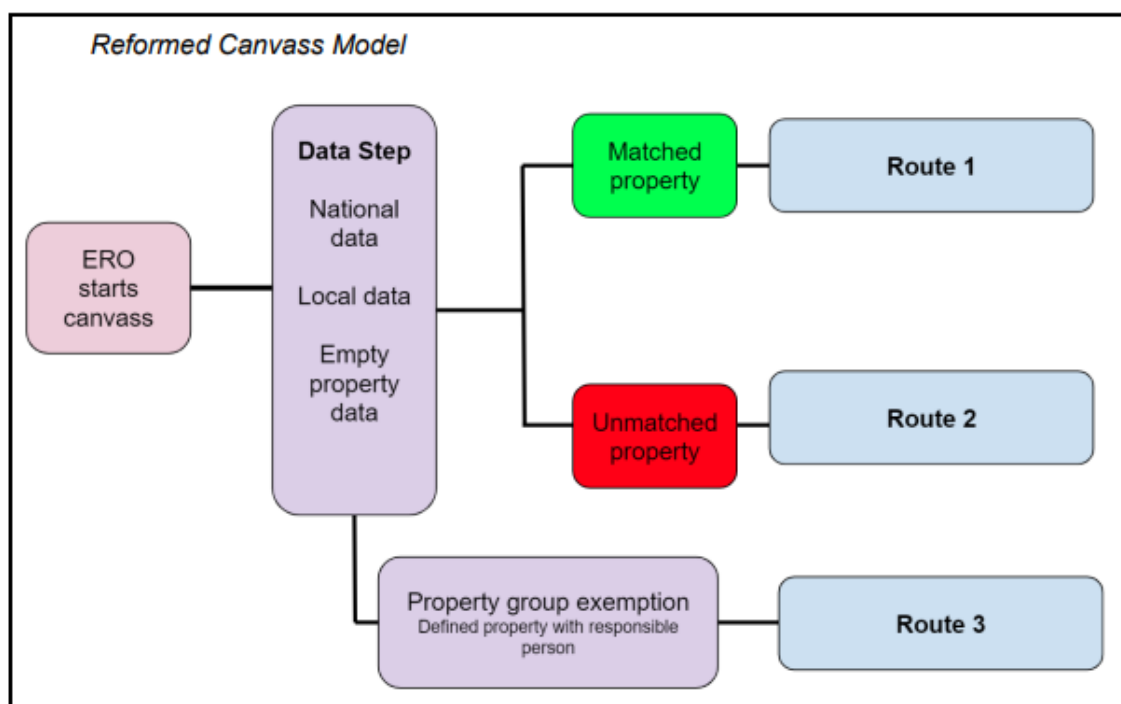
3. The Committee is asked to note the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Ensuring the Electoral Register is as up to date as possible and carrying out proactive electoral activity is key to public engagement to ensure residents are registered to enable them to vote when an election occurs.

BACKGROUND

- Each year the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) has a duty to carry out a full annual review of the Electoral Register by contacting all residential addresses to establish if the information currently held on the Electoral Register is complete and accurate, this is called the Annual Canvass. The purpose of the canvass is to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. This means identifying citizens who should be registered but are currently not, as well as identifying electors who are no longer at a property and should therefore be removed from the register. A revised version of the electoral register must be published by December 1st each year, following the conclusion of the annual canvass.
- With the introduction of the canvass reforms in 2020, only properties where all the electors cannot be matched against national and/or local data are required to respond. The overall aim of canvass reform is to deliver a more efficient system by which Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) can maintain their electoral registers with no negative effect on citizens, or on the accuracy and completeness of the registers.
- The canvass incorporates a 'data step' at the outset of the process. This informs the ERO, based on the data available, which properties are likely to have an unchanged household composition, based on matching data on the electoral register against national Government data and, where relevant, locally held data sources. Local datasets are available to the ERO under their existing powers, provided by Regulations 23, 35 and 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001.



8. The ERO will follow one of three routes for each property:

Route 1 - the matched properties route, this will be used for properties where the data indicates no change in household composition.

Route 2 - the unmatched properties route, this will be used for properties where data matching has highlighted that there may be a change to the information the ERO currently holds for the property.

Route 3 - These properties are defined as Care Homes and Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) all of which are required to provide an update on their current occupants.

Route 1

9. The National data matching process must take place between 1 June to 31 August 2022 and Electoral Services carried out the National data match download on 23 June 2022 and were provided with the results on 27 June 2022. There were 227,383 registered electors and 142,519 properties in Doncaster and 110,867 (77.79%) properties successfully matched from the initial National data matching download for Route 1.

10. Electoral Services managed to obtain confirmation from 23,148 Route 1 properties reducing the number of letters needing to be sent to Route 1 properties from 110,867 letters to 87,719 letters. Letters were sent to those 87,719 properties on 16 August 2022 advising residents to contact us, only if the information we currently hold is incorrect.

Route 2

11. These properties are the un-matched properties that do require a response. Under stage 1, we sent letters and e-mails to 31,551 properties and 7,980 (25.29%) properties responded.

12. Therefore for stage 2, we sent a Canvass form to the outstanding 23,571 and received a further 3,628 (15.39%) responses back. This left approx. 20,000 properties still outstanding and requiring a personal door knock visit for stage 3. Canvassers are currently visiting these outstanding properties and are trying to obtain a response or accurate update for the ERO and so far a Canvass staff have managed to obtain responses for a further 4,208 properties giving a total response of 15,816 (50.17%) to Route 2 so far which is on par with this stage of the canvass last year.

Route 3

13. These properties are defined as Care Homes, all of which are required to provide an update on their current occupants. The Electoral Services Team have been contacting these properties directly due to the high turn around in these types of properties to establish that everything is as up to date as possible, so far we have

achieved a 84.31% response rate and personal visits will now take place in order to ensure a 100% response.

Pro-active activity

14. In line with Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission guidance, the ERO should look to carry out mitigating actions to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register. Therefore the Electoral Services team have been carrying out the following mitigating actions:

- Contact elector’s via email, where an email address is held on the electoral register
- Contact elector’s via telephone, where a phone number is held on the electoral register
- Data matching and data mining against Council records (Council Tax, Housing Benefit, customer services data etc)
- Liaising with Council Tax, St Leger Homes, local letting agents, new home developers, the National Residential Landlords Association to encourage and capture new tenants
- Additional Corporate Comms messages to encourage non-responders to respond.
- Reminder Canvass Forms (with pre-paid return envelopes, which were not previously sent) posted to non-responding properties where we hold no other form of contact details.
- Canvass forms (open and not enveloped) posted to properties when a canvasser has visited several times and not been able to obtain a response in the hope that they read it and respond knowing it’s been hand delivered.

15. In line with previous annual canvass outcomes, Electoral Services are on track to complete in time for the ERO to publish the revised Electoral Register on 1st December 2022.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

16. Electoral Registration is a statutory function and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements.








REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION


17. This report is primary for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

18.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider –	Neutral or No implications
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			Negative overall	
 Tackling Climate Change				✓
Comments:				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
Comments:				
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
Comments:				
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓
Comments:				
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs				✓
Comments:				
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
Comments:				
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
Comments:				

 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Comments:				
Fair & Inclusive	✓			
<p>The Council has a duty to ensure all eligible electors can register to vote and respond to canvass forms easily and are provided with several ways in order to do so. Registration information is also available in alternative languages, Braille and by video (YouTube) link on the Council Web page.</p>				

Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 11/11/2022]

19. There are comprehensive statutory provisions covering the delivery of electoral registration activity:

- Representation of the People Act
- The Representation of the People (England & Wales) Regulations
- The Representation of the People (Annual Canvass Amendment) Regulations
- Local Government Act
- Electoral Registration and Administration Act

Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 10/11/2022]

20. This work is funded solely from the Registration of Electors budget (NC003). Central Government no longer provide Councils with funding towards the annual canvass due to the reduction in the cost of delivering the Canvass under the Canvass Reforms.

Human Resources Implications

21. There are no Human Resources Implications arising from this report.

Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 11/11/2022]

22. The 'Electoral Automated Service' is used to allow electors to respond to canvass communication anytime via an automated service; on-line, text, phone or e-mail rather than just by the more expensive option of return post. The Technology Governance Board (TGB) recently approved a request to renew the contract for this service to 31/08/24, in line with the contract for the Xpress Electoral Management Software. The Gov.UK Notify solution is also used for emailing electors in relation to the annual canvass.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

23. Every effort is made to drive Individual Electoral Registration to ensure the Council and the ERO meets the Electoral Commission's Performance Standards and complies with their legal duties.

CONSULTATION

24. Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

25. Previous EDSC reports.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

26. ERO – Electoral Registration Officer
TGB – Technology Governance Board

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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Damian Allen

Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 22 November 2022

To: The Chair and Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Report Title: 2023 Parliamentary Boundary Review Proposals

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On the 8 June 2021 the independent Boundary Commission for England released their initial proposals for new constituency boundaries using data from the Parliamentary Electorate as of the 2 March 2020. Since then there have been two rounds of statutory consultation to which there have been over 45,000 responses overall. The Boundary Commission have now considered those comments received and taken them into account in developing their revised proposals which are now published for final consultation with the public for four weeks from 8 November to 5 December 2022. This report provides an update on what the proposals mean for Doncaster and the changes made since their initial proposal.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Committee is asked to note the report for information. Any feedback or comments are to be made to the Boundary Commission for England direct using their online portal: www.bcereviews.org.uk by the consultation deadline of 5 December 2022.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. These proposals as they stand mean that some Doncaster wards will move from one Doncaster Constituency into a different Doncaster constituency. Some Doncaster residents could have significant changes by no longer having a Doncaster Member of Parliament and moving to a Rotherham MP that will cover wards between Rotherham and Doncaster and some will share a Doncaster MP with wards within North Lincolnshire.

BACKGROUND

5. The Boundary Commission for England has the task of periodically reviewing the boundaries of all the Parliamentary constituencies in England. They are currently conducting a review on the basis of rules most recently updated by Parliament in 2020. These latest rules retain 650 constituencies for the UK Parliament as a whole, and require constituencies that they propose or recommend to comply with strict parameters. In particular, the Commission is required to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is more equal; in doing so, the number of constituencies in England will increase from 533 to 543. Accordingly, every recommended constituency must have an electorate (as at 2 March 2020) that is no smaller than 69,724 and no larger than 77,062.
6. Parliamentary Boundary Commissions are an 'arms length' public body. This means they are 'sponsored' by a UK Government department (Cabinet Office). However, Government Ministers and officials have no direct input or control over the substantive work of the Commissioners in the reviewing of constituencies and development of proposals and recommendations for change: decisions on those matters are taken by the independent Commissioners, working within a legislative framework of rules established by Parliament. The Chair of the Commission is the Speaker of the House of Commons, but by convention he or she does not participate in the conduct of a constituencies review or formulation of the Commission's recommendations. The Deputy Chair therefore, leads the Commission in the conduct of the review. The Deputy Chair must be a serving Judge of the High Court, and is selected and appointed by the Lord Chancellor. The Deputy Chair is supported by two other Commissioners, whose appointments are made following an open public appointments selection process.
7. Members of the public are encouraged to visit www.bcereviews.org.uk/ to view maps showing the proposed new boundaries and provide feedback before the consultation closes on 5 December 2022. This will be the final chance for public to give their views on the proposals. After this final consultation closes, the Commission will analyse the responses and form its final recommendations, which will be submitted to Parliament by 1 July 2023.

The Revised Proposals

8. There have been no changes to the initial proposals to form a cross-county boundary constituency of Doncaster East and Axholme; the proposals mean that Doncaster will still have three constituencies, however one will no longer only contain Doncaster wards and we will take in three wards from North Lincolnshire (18,416 electors), this means their three wards would be in a Doncaster Constituency/MP, to now cover that area and we would receive ballot papers from North Lincolnshire Council for those three wards when a parliamentary election takes place. Another Constituency will see two Doncaster wards (20,565 electors) given to Rotherham and those two wards would be in a Rotherham Constituency/MP, we would therefore provide ballot papers to Rotherham council from those wards when a parliamentary election takes place. This is nothing new for some Councils however, Doncaster has been fortunate to hold three wholly Doncaster constituencies in the past.
9. Page 13 of the revised proposals report at 3.18 breaks down the proposals and the feedback and counter proposals already received and the reason for the Assistant Commissioners not making any further changes to their initial proposals for Doncaster.
10. Below is a breakdown of the proposals for the three Doncaster constituencies:

Doncaster Central CC *(proposed constituency name)*

- The name has changed back to the original current name of 'Doncaster Central' from the proposed 'Doncaster Town' due to Doncaster receiving City status.
- It resembles the current existing Doncaster Central constituency but without any part of the Stainforth & Barnby Dun ward.
- The proposal also contains all of the Tickhill & Wadworth ward, which is currently divided between constituencies.

Doncaster Central CC		
Ward	Local Authority	Electorate: 75,007
Armthorpe	Doncaster	10,475
Balby South	Doncaster	6,813
Bessacarr	Doncaster	11,476
Edenthorpe & Kirk Sandall	Doncaster	7,937
Hexthorpe & Balby North	Doncaster	6,679
Tickhill & Wadworth	Doncaster	8,823
Town	Doncaster	11,001
Wheatley Hills & Intake	Doncaster	11,803

Doncaster East and Axholme CC *(proposed constituency name)*

- In Humberside and South Yorkshire they have changed a constituency that crosses the county boundary which is Doncaster and North Lincolnshire by combining the Isle of Axholme area of North Lincolnshire unitary authority with wards from the east of the Borough of Doncaster.

- The Thorne & Moorends ward is currently divided between the current existing Doncaster North and Don Valley constituencies, and they propose this ward now be included wholly within the proposed Doncaster East and Axholme constituency:

Doncaster East and Axholme CC		
Ward	Local Authority	Electorate: 70,113
Finningley	Doncaster	13,806
Hatfield	Doncaster	11,576
Rossington & Bawtry	Doncaster	13,549
Thorne & Moorends	Doncaster	12,766
Axholme Central	North Lincolnshire	6,077
Axholme North	North Lincolnshire	6,436
Axholme South	North Lincolnshire	5,903

Doncaster North CC *(proposed constituency name)*

- The Stainforth & Barnby Dun ward is currently divided between constituencies and they propose that the existing Doncaster North constituency boundary be realigned to follow the ward boundaries, and include the whole of the Stainforth & Barnby Dun ward.

Doncaster North CC		
Ward	Local Authority	Electorate: 71,739
Adwick le Street & Carcroft	Doncaster	11,505
Bentley	Doncaster	12,442
Mexborough	Doncaster	11,438
Norton & Askern	Doncaster	11,524
Roman Ridge	Doncaster	8,565
Sprotbrough	Doncaster	8,992
Stainforth & Barnby Dun	Doncaster	7,273

11. Two Doncaster wards; Conisbrough and Edlington & Warmsworth (20,565 electors) will move into a Rotherham Council constituency with a Rotherham Member of Parliament, we would therefore provide ballot papers to Rotherham council for those wards when a parliamentary election takes place:

Rawmarsh and Conisbrough CC *(proposed constituency name)*

- They propose to group the remaining Borough of Doncaster wards (Conisbrough, and Edlington & Warmsworth) with the Borough of Rotherham wards to form a Rotherham Constituency and propose the constituency be called Rawmarsh and Conisbrough.

Rawmarsh and Conisbrough CC		
Ward	Local Authority	Electorate: 70,272
Conisbrough	Doncaster	12,240
Edlington & Warmsworth	Doncaster	8,325
Bramley & Ravenfield	Rotherham	7,207

Hooper	Rotherham	9,504
Kilnhurst & Swinton East	Rotherham	6,204
Rawmarsh East	Rotherham	6,879
Rawmarsh West	Rotherham	6,880
Swinton Rockingham	Rotherham	6,336
Wath	Rotherham	6,697

Have Your Say

12. The Boundary Commission are promoting and encouraging the use of a specifically-designed consultation website as the primary tool for displaying these proposals, and receiving comments on them to help them shape the new constituencies. Any comments or recommendations on these Final proposals are to be made between 8 November to 5 December 2022 to the Boundary Commission for England direct using this link:
<https://www.bcereviews.org.uk/>
13. You can also follow the Boundary Commission on their social media channels, [@BCEReviews](#) on Twitter and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BCEReviews

OPTIONS CONSIDERED



14. All of the above are statutory requirements of the Boundary Commission. This report is primarily for information only, any feedback or comments are to be made to the Boundary Commission for England direct using their online portal: www.bcereviews.org.uk/

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

15. This report is primary for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

16.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 Tackling Climate Change				✓
Comments:				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓

Comments:				
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
Comments:				
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓
Comments:				
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs				✓
Comments:				
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
Comments:				
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
Comments:				
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Comments:				
Fair & Inclusive	✓			
The Council has a duty to ensure that the final approved Parliamentary Boundaries are successfully completed to ensure eligible electors are able to freely vote in the correct constituencies ensuring freedom of expression and political debate by exercising their vote.				

Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 11/11/2022]

17. There are comprehensive statutory provisions covering the delivery of Boundary Changes. Significant changes were most recently made to the law governing Parliamentary constituency reviews by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 and the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011. Both have a major impact on the way a review operates. Furthermore, as neither of the constituency reviews conducted since the 2011 Act resulted in new constituencies being implemented, the 2023 Review is likely to result in a significant degree of change to a large number of existing constituencies, if for no other reason than the need to adjust for 20 years of change to the distribution of electors since the data on which the existing constituencies are based was established.

Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 10/11/2022]

18. At this stage it is unknown if there will be any financial implications for Doncaster Council. Any costs should be managed within the registration of electors budget on cost centre NC003. Any budget pressure that may arise as a result should be identified as soon as possible with a further report required to identify funding.
19. Parliamentary Boundary Commissions are 'arms length' public bodies. This means they are 'sponsored' by a UK Government department (Cabinet Office), but are outside of direct Ministerial control. The sponsor department provides funding and other resources (staff, accommodation, IT infrastructure, and often other 'back office' support), and monitors that those resources are being utilised appropriately and efficiently.

Human Resources Implications

20. Human Resources implications have not been requested for this report.

Technology Implications

21. Technology Implications have not been requested for this report.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

22. The Council has a duty to ensure that the final approved Parliamentary Boundaries are successfully implemented. Should these initial proposals be approved, close working relationships between electoral services teams for Doncaster, Rotherham and North Lincolnshire will be needed to administer the Parliamentary Elections in order to ensure that all three (Acting) Returning Officers comply with their legal duties.

CONSULTATION

23. There is a 4 week public consultation (8 November to 5 December 2022) on these final proposals during which anyone can view and comment on their

revised proposals, this will be the final chance for public to give their views on the proposals. After this final consultation closes on 5 December, the Commission will analyse the responses and form its final recommendations, which should be provided to Parliament (and published) by 1 July 2023.

24. It will then be for the Government to prepare a consolidate statutory instrument to implement the new constituencies for the whole UK – which should be provided to the privy Council for approval within four months of the Government receiving the last report of the four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions for the UK.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

25. <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

26. Not applicable

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 22 November 2022

To: The Chair and Members of the

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES COMMITTEE

Report Title: Elections Act

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is designed to provide an update on the Elections Act 2022, with a particular focus on the measures which come into force ahead of the 4 May 2023 polls.
2. One of the first changes to be implemented is from May 2023; voters across England will be required to bring photo ID to vote in person in a polling station. A new form of identification, the Voter Authority Certificate, will be introduced as a form of ID for those who do not have another form of eligible ID. However, the requirement for voter ID to be provided at UK Parliamentary General elections will only take effect for polls after 5 October 2023.

EXEMPT REPORT

3. This is not an exempt report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. This report is for information, the Committee is asked to note the report and make any additional comments in relation to the contents.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. Whilst Doncaster does not have any scheduled elections in 2023, photo ID measures would apply to any by-elections from 4 May 2023 onwards. Added to this, all Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) will need to be able to provide those electors with free voter identification documents from January 2023, whether they have polls or not.

BACKGROUND

6. The Elections Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, with the following measures applying to UK Parliamentary elections in Great Britain, PCC elections in England and Wales and English local government polls:
 - require voters to show **photo ID** at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued. (*for Elections from May 2023*)
 - require local authority Electoral Registration Officers to **issue free voter identification documents** to eligible residents without valid photo ID. (*expected to commence from January 2023*)
 - enable electors to **apply online for an absent vote**, with both online and paper applications requiring the applicant's identity to be verified. (*expected to be in place from July 2023*).
 - **restrict the handling of postal votes**, including limiting the number of postal votes an individual can hand in. (*likely to be in place from autumn 2023*).
 - require **postal voters to reapply every three years**, replacing current rules of refreshing their signature every five years. (*transitional arrangements in place from January 2024*)
 - further **limit the number of people someone may act as proxy** for. (*expected to be in place for elections from May 2024*).
 - **extend election accessibility**, including requiring Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to provide support for voters with a disability in polling stations. (*expected to be in place for elections from May 2023*)
 - **change voting and candidacy arrangements for EU voters**. (*expected to be in from June 2023*)
 - **First Past the post** for Mayoral and PCC elections. (*for elections from May 2023*)
 - scrap the 'fifteen year rule' to **allow all British citizens living overseas to vote in UK Parliamentary elections**, regardless of when they left the UK. (*expected to be in place from July 2023*).
7. Other measures being introduced, that will have implications for political parties, candidates and campaigners are:
 - new spending rules for non-party campaigners
 - clarification of undue influence

- Introducing a new sanction for intimidation
- Requirement for digital imprints on online campaign materials

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

8. Electors will be required to identify themselves by showing an approved form of photographic identification before being issued with a ballot paper in a polling station at:

- UK Parliamentary general elections
- local elections in England
- UK-wide national referendums
- local referendums in England
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales.

Legislation makes it clear that polling station staff will not have latitude to accept other documents in lieu of those specified by the Act. The Presiding Officer (PO) has the final say on accepting an electors photographic Identification and there is no right of appeal and the RO is not able to overrule the PO. Proxy voters will need to show their own photographic identification, not that of the elector they are voting on behalf of. There will need to be a facility for checking documents in private for any electors who wear a religious face covering, therefore, polling stations will need to have a private area or privacy screens.

EROs must:

- ensure voters are aware of the new requirements and can successfully cast their vote, and
- deliver a service to assess applications and issue electoral identity documents to electors who apply for one.

The Elections Act 2022 defines the list of acceptable documentation which is included at **Appendix A** of this report.

Expired photo identification will be accepted so long as the photo remains a good enough likeness from which to identify the elector. For electors in Great Britain who do not have an accepted form of photographic identification, EROs will be required to provide an electoral identity document - called a **Voter Authority Certificate** ('Voter Cert') or Anonymous Electors Document to eligible electors who apply for one.

There will be three 'versions' of these documents:

- the **Voter Authority Certificate** - referred to as the Voter Card throughout Parliamentary passage of the Elections Act;
- the **temporary Voter Authority Certificate** - which EROs will have discretion to provide in contingency situations; and
- the **Anonymous Electors Document** - for use by those registered anonymous electors only.

Voter Authority Certificate

An A4 paper-based document, with inherent security features, displaying:

- The elector's name
- Photograph
- Date of issue
- Issuing local authority
- An 'identifier' (i.e. a reference number)
- Recommended renewal date (10 years)

The government have contracted a Print Supplier who will produce and dispatch the Voter Authority Certificates direct to electors, once the application has been processed by EROs via the ERO Portal.

Application process

The Elector:

- GOV.UK 'Get ready to vote in person' digital service – an online application service on the GOV.UK website
- Paper application - content prescribed
- Name / Address / DoB / Photograph
- National Insurance Number to be checked through the ERO Portal
- Electors can apply at the same time as they apply to register to vote
- The deadline for applications for electoral identity documents will be 5pm on day -6 (6 working days ahead of a poll).

Temporary Voter Authority Certificate

For valid applications made before the deadline (5pm, -6), which have been processed, determined and sent to the print suppliers by the ERO, but where the elector has not received their substantive Voter Authority Certificate before polling day, EROs will have the option to locally print a temporary Voter Authority Certificate up until 5pm on polling day.

This temporary document will be valid only for the relevant polling day and the elector will need to collect it in person from the ERO's office (or other delivery or collection arrangement as agreed with the ERO).

Anonymous Electors

Anonymous electors must apply for an **Anonymous Elector's Document** to vote in person and must do so each year if and when they renew their anonymous registration. They will need to provide a photo as part of their application and the application is subject to a national insurance number check as with Voter Certificate applications. If an anonymous elector is registered in more than one authority and wants to vote in person at each of them, they will need to apply for an AED for each. Anonymous electors voting in person will also need to bring their poll card when voting, as they currently do.

Public Awareness

The Electoral Commission will be launching a new public awareness campaign in January 2023. Through integrated advertising, partnership work, press activity, organic digital engagement and information on their website to raise awareness of the new requirement of Photo ID.

To balance the fact that not everyone across England will have elections in May 2023 but many are likely to see news coverage about the change, the advertising campaign will follow two phases; Phase one: raising awareness of the new requirement to bring ID across England. Phase two: reminding voters in areas where elections are taking place to bring their ID with them when they vote.

EXTEND ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY

9. The Elections Act 2022:

- creates a requirement for ROs to provide each polling station with such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently and in secret. (Relevant persons are defined in the legislation as those who find it difficult or impossible to vote due to blindness, partial sight or another disability).
- requires ROs to have regard to the Commission's guidance on the equipment to provide at polling stations.
- extends the rules on who can act as a companion to include anyone who is over the age of 18.

It also introduces a duty on the Electoral Commission to provide guidance to ROs on the requirement to provide reasonable equipment to assist voters with disabilities in polling stations. ROs must have regard to this guidance, which will support them to make accessibility arrangements for May 2023 elections and beyond. The Electoral Commission has launched its consultation on draft guidance for [Returning Officers: Assistance with voting for persons with disabilities](#). The updated guidance should help ROs and their teams understand the barriers to voting faced by those with disabilities and make informed decisions on what they can do to help make voting accessible for all.

The draft guidance covers:

- Understanding barriers to voting for voters with disabilities
- Providing equipment at the polling station that enables or makes voting easier for voters with disabilities
- Making decisions about providing additional support and equipment for voters
- Ensuring those working to support the poll are aware of accessibility needs
- Raising awareness about the voting process and support available
- Communicating the voting process and support available
- Working with local networks and civil society organisations in your area
- Reviewing the election

FIRST PAST THE POST FOR MAYORAL ELECTIONS

10. The voting system for all Combined Authority Mayors, the Mayor of London, and Local Authority Mayors in England, and for all Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections in England and Wales will be changed from the Supplementary Vote System to the Simple Majority Voting System, also known as First Past the Post.

It is expected this will be in place for 4 May 2023 elections onwards, including any by-elections. The next PCC election in South Yorkshire will be on 2 May 2024, the next Doncaster Mayoral Election on 1 May 2025 and the next South Yorkshire Mayoral Election will be in May 2026.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11. Elections and Electoral Registration is a statutory function and must be carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. A review of polling station staff training will be required to cover the changes. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) recommends an extra Poll Clerk per polling station to help with voter identification - we have up to 173 polling stations in Doncaster.


Based on the Electoral Commission draft guidance, Doncaster is in a strong position in terms of accessibility. However there will be a need for consultation with local disability groups/forums within Doncaster to help identify any best practice examples and what additional support could be put in place. Some of our polling stations are not as accessible as we would like, mostly due to limited space within the building/room - but very limited options of alternative buildings. These will be reviewed as part of the statutory Polling District review (late 2023).








REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

12. This report is primary for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 13.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 Tackling Climate Change				✓

Comments:				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
Comments:				
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
Comments:				
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓
Comments:				
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs				✓
Comments:				
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
Comments:				
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
Comments:				
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Comments:				

Fair & Inclusive	✓			
<p>The Council has a duty to ensure Elections and Referendums are well managed to allow all eligible electors to freely vote by secret ballot ensuring freedom of expression and political debate by exercising their vote. The Council has worked hard to ensure that voting is accessible to all. A full Polling Places review was carried out in 2019 and full risk assessment reviews in 2021 to ensure all Polling Stations are compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and will continue to be reviewed to ensure they meet any new legislative requirements.</p>				

Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 11/11/2022]

- 14. The Elections Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and the secondary legislation which provides for how new voter ID measures from the Election Act will work in practice was laid in parliament on 3 November 2022 and are due to become law in mid-January 2023.

Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 10/11/2022]

- 15. The government have committed to providing New Burdens Funding to local authorities to cover the increased costs resulting from implementing measures in the Elections Act.
- 16. The first ‘round’ of funding will be for the implementation of the accessibility policy changes and the introduction of voter identification. Initial grants will be received in November 2022, with further grant payments in April 2023 and April 2024.

Human Resources Implications

- 17. Human Resources Implications have not been requested for this report.

Technology Implications

- 18. Technology Implications have not been requested for this report

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- 19. Ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to ensure the Council, RO and ERO meets the Electoral Commission’s Performance Standards and complies with their legal statutory duties. Delivering well-run elections improve our reputation and meeting the Electoral Commission’s Performance Standards.
- 20. There is national concern about finding additional staff to work on polling stations and that experienced staff may no longer wish to do the role due to the added responsibility and potential for abuse from electors. There is no legislative requirement for a female member of staff on each polling station but need to consider electors who may not wish to reveal their face to a male staff member for

religious/ cultural reason. There will be a need for an in depth training session for all polling staff, particularly POs regarding the photo ID acceptable and new forms to be completed. There will be a need to purchase additional polling station equipment such as privacy booths and mirrors.

CONSULTATION

21. Not applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. Association of Electoral Administrators newsletters www.aea-elections.co.uk
The Electoral Commission newsletters <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

23.

ERO – Electoral Registration Officer

RO – Returning Officer

PO – Presiding Officer

PCC – Police and Crime Commissioner

DLUHC - The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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Appendix A

List of photographic identification that will be accepted in relevant GB elections:

Identity Document	Notes
A United Kingdom passport	
A passport issued by an EEA state or a Commonwealth country	
A licence to drive a motor vehicle granted under - 15(i) Part 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, or (ii) the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (SI 1981/154 (N.I. 1))	This includes provisional driving licences
A driving licence issued by any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or an EEA State	
A biometric immigration document issued in accordance with regulations under section 5 of the UK Borders Act 2007	
An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)	<p>A wide range of identify documents are PASS accredited including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CitizenCard • Bracknell Forest Council e-card • My ID Card • Milton Keynes all in 1 MK Card • NUS Totum ID card • Validate UK Card • Young Scot Card • Southwark roof of Age London Card • One ID 4 U Card
A Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identification Card)	Commonly known as a MOD90
<p>Any of the following concessionary travel passes:</p> <p>Funded by the UK Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Person's Bus Pass • Disabled Person's Bus Pass • Oyster 60+ Card • Freedom Pass <p>Funded by the Scottish Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Entitlement Card <p>Funded by the Welsh Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 and over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card • Disabled Person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card 	

<p>Issued under the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Senior SmartPass; • A Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass; • A War Disablement SmartPass or War Disabled SmartPass; • A 60+ SmartPass; • A Half Fare SmartPass 	
<p>A badge of a form prescribed under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or section 14 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 (blue badge scheme);</p>	
<p>An electoral identity document issued under section 13BD (electoral identity document: Great Britain);</p>	
<p>An anonymous elector's document issued under section 513BE (anonymous elector's document: Great Britain) the holder of which has an anonymous entry at the time of the application for a ballot paper;</p>	
<p>An electoral identity card issued under section 13C (electoral identity card: Northern Ireland);</p>	<p>Voter Authority Certificate (VIC) - referred to as the Voter Card throughout Parliamentary passage of the Elections Act</p>
<p>A national identity card issued by an EEA state.</p>	

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