

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**This should be carried out during the development stage of a new project, strategy, policy or service or when you are reviewing an existing project, strategy, policy or service.**

**By understanding and meeting people's differing needs we can provide more effective services.**

### **Name and brief description of project, strategy, policy or service being assessed**

Electoral Services is a service which is mindful and focussed on the need to ensure that every person who is entitled to both register and vote in elections can do so.

Our aim is to provide a professional and customer focussed approach to:

1. Publishing and maintaining the register of electors
2. Managing all County, Police Commissioner, District and Parish Council elections
3. Managing all Parliamentary, European elections and Referenda

### **Information used to analyse the impact on people affected by the project, strategy, policy or service**

State who will be affected, the relevant information you are using to assess how it will affect them, note any relevant consultation, surveys, etc.

#### **Registration**

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer are responsible for both the compilation of the electoral register and the delivery of elections to all eligible electors in the District.

Registration is established by any member of a household completing and/or amending an annual canvass form delivered to each property within the Braintree District. Responses can be made either by returning the form in a pre paid envelope or by confirming information by phone, text or internet. The design of the initial form is prescribed by law and should therefore not be amended.

Reminders and Final requests are programmed in throughout the period of canvass and sent to all properties where no response has received. Notices of Removal from the register are sent to electors where information has not been confirmed within the past 2 years.

Annual canvass forms and Voter Registration forms are made available in a number of languages and can be supplied in larger print on request. The Registration Officer also has a statutory responsibility to assist electors in registering on request.

### **Access to Voting**

The Returning Officer has a statutory obligation to advise all eligible electors of the timing of an election and the individual electors chosen method of voting (postal, proxy or at polling station).

Postal votes are distributed to electors within prescribed deadlines in formats recommended by the Electoral Commission and legislation.

Polling Stations are, in the main located within public buildings such as Village and Public Halls, Schools, Churches/Church Halls, and as such are DDI compliant. Where access is limited Presiding Officers are trained and authorised to make voting possible to anyone who is unable to gain access to the Polling Station. Access to polling stations is reviewed and documented by all Presiding Officers at every election and where practicable remedial action implemented or in extreme cases alternative venues sought.

**Use the information above to assess the impact of your project, policy, strategy or service on people from the following protected groups: (these are defined by the Equality Act 2010)**

<b>Protected Group</b>		<b>Positive Impact/ Benefit</b>	<b>Negative Impact/ Disadvantage</b>	<b>Explanation – State how</b>
<b>Age</b>	Children 0-16	N/A	N/A	<b>In complying with legislation and supporting electors in registering and voting the Returning Officer has made a significant impact to any elector who wants to contribute to the democratic</b>
	Young People 17-25	N/A	N/A	
	Ages 26-59	N/A	N/A	
	Older People 60+	N/A	N/A	
<b>Disability Include</b>	Blind/Partially Sighted	N/A	Yes	
	Deaf/Hearing Impaired	N/A	N/A	

<b>disabled people and/or carers</b>	Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	N/A	Yes	<b>process.</b>  <b>Postal voting is available “on demand” and Presiding Officers are authorised to make suitable alternative arrangements at Polling Stations. These actions provide electors with a range of options to suit their personal requirements.</b>
	Learning Difficulties	N/A	N/A	
	Mental Health Difficulties	N/A	N/A	
<b>Gender</b>	Men	N/A	N/A	
	Women	N/A	N/A	
	Transgender	N/A	N/A	
	Pregnancy & Maternity impact	N/A	N/A	
	Marriage & Civil Partnership	N/A	N/A	
<b>Race</b>	White	N/A	N/A	
	Asian	N/A	N/A	
	Black	N/A	N/A	
	Mixed Dual Heritage	N/A	N/A	
<b>Religion/Belief</b>	Buddhist	N/A	N/A	
	Christian	N/A	N/A	
	Hindu	N/A	N/A	
	Jewish	N/A	N/A	
	Muslim	N/A	N/A	
	Sikh	N/A	N/A	
	Other – please specify			
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Lesbian	N/A	N/A	
	Gay men			
	Heterosexual			
	Bi-sexual			
<b>Other (optional)</b>	Use to define Impact on any groups specific to this Strategy, Policy or Function not listed above.	N/A	N/A	

**If you identified any negative impacts above then either:**

**(a) Your proposal, policy or service is treating people from a protected group above less favourably because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation**

**or**

**(b) ✓ Your proposal, policy or service is intended to treat everyone equally but, unintentionally, people from a protected group above can be particularly disadvantaged or treated less favourably than other others**

**PLEASE TICK WHICHEVER APPLIES**

---

**If you ticked (a) this is direct discrimination, which is illegal and you cannot proceed**

---

**If you ticked (b):**

- 1. Can any negative impacts be minimized or removed? If so state what changes you will make.**
- 2. If you cannot minimize or remove negative impacts they must be justified and you must state your justification**

**When considering the location of a Polling Station the Service has regard to access arrangements and where practicable ensures that Electors with mobility issues are accommodated. Considerations range from Full access via Ramps to the erection of Temporary access solutions.**

**Whilst every effort is made to facilitate FULL access it is not always possible for the Returning Officer to effect adaptaion to private properties used as Polling Stations**

**Electors are given every opportunity to apply for Postal votes. In addition Presiding Officers are encouraged to be flexible when issuing Ballot papers by taking the ballot paper to the elector and the Ballot box to the perimeter of the Station**

**Although the design of the actual Ballot paper is prescribed by legislation Polling Stations are equipped with Braille template to allow visually impaired electors to cast their vote.**

**Postal voters who cannot supply a consistent signature can apply to the Electoral Registration Officer for an exemption in the form of a “Signature Waiver”**

**All pre election material can be supplied in a range of media including large print and Braille to allow electors to be informed.**

**If you identified any positive impacts is there anything further you can do to increase or extend the positive benefits? If so state what changes you will make**

**Completed By: Steve Daynes**

**Approved By**



**Service: Electoral Services**

**Date : 20 March 2013**

**Each service should retain the signed copy of the Assessment.**

**An electronic copy should be sent to [angve@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:angve@braintree.gov.uk) for publication on the Council’s website – this is a requirement to ensure that we meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010.**