
To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 14 October 2015

Subject: Electoral Participation Framework 2015

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide information to the Committee on activities undertaken within the Electoral Participation Framework together with details of electorate figures and response rate to the annual canvass.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the framework and makes any comments or recommendations to the Electoral Registration Officer for consideration on future activities.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) has a duty to encourage participation in electoral registration and elections as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983. As part of the Electoral Commission's performance standards the ERO is required to demonstrate that they have a public engagement strategy in place to encourage participation. There has been a framework in place in Coventry for the last 5 years and each year it is reviewed to ensure that the best use of resources and build on success. This framework also now includes the activities undertaken during Local Democracy Week as the responsibility for this has now transferred to the Electoral Services Team.
- 3.2 Attached to the report at Appendix 1 is a draft framework which has been based on the electoral registration and election timetable for the financial year and leading into the elections in May 2016. The general objectives of the Framework are to:
- Encourage people to register to vote during the annual canvass and respond to forms
 - Promote electoral registration and voting in 'hard to reach' community groups, including young people and home movers
 - Encourage people to register to vote at the election in May 2016 and any future referendum
 - Assist effective local reporting of electoral issues and events
- 3.3 As detailed in appendix 1 to the report the proposed framework will be carried out in 3 phases:
- Phase 1: Annual household canvass and outreach including Local Democracy Week (July – November 2015)

- Phase 2: Increasing registration and awareness of alternative voting methods in advance of the elections (January – March 2016)
 - City Council and Police & Crime Commissioner Elections promotion and outreach (March – May 2016)
- 3.4 The proposed objectives within the framework are to:
- Encourage registration and encourage householders to respond to the annual household canvass in order to obtain information to encourage new residents to register
 - Encourage eligible first time voters and young people to vote
 - Encourage electoral registration and voting in "hard to reach" community groups including young people and home movers
 - Assist effective local reporting of the annual household canvass promote registration during Local Democracy Week
 - Encourage people to register for and vote at elections
 - Assist effective local reporting of the elections
- 3.5 This is the first annual canvass since the move to Individual Electoral Registration (IER) and presents certain challenges around residents understanding the new processes. We have therefore been trying to ensure that we get information out that explains what needs to be done which has included leaflets with the Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs).
- 3.6 The service continues to work with other City Council departments and community groups in order to carry out activities and improve the way information is shared. This includes work which is being conducted to consider a shared data approach with Council Tax and also the 'My Account' portal to obtain information on new residents and changes to eligibility to register. Discussions are also taking place with the Customer Contact centre to establish how information can be obtained at first point of contact which reduces the need to send household enquiry forms when changes to residents happen at a property, also to establish how this can be used to encourage people to register individually.
- 3.7 We are working closely with the Universities and Student Unions at both universities to encourage students to register. We have attended Freshers' Fayres at City College, the University College, Coventry and Warwick Universities. We will receive during October information from the University Accommodation teams and private landlords of the names of the students in their halls to enable us to issue Invitations to Register. We are also recruiting dedicated Canvassers to visit Residential Care Homes and both Coventry and Warwick University Halls of Residence. For the Universities we are in discussions regarding recruiting students for the halls of residence as they do not like non-students entering the properties.
- 3.8 Attached at appendix 2 are comparisons of the electorate figures at three points over the last 12 months, together with pending deletions which are electors who will be removed over the next 2-3 weeks, potential electors who have received invitations to register and unconfirmed electors which will impact on the overall electorate when the revised register is published on 1 December 2015.
- 3.9 The response rate to the annual canvass as at 24 September 2015 was 59%; this is after 3 forms have been sent to properties. The next stage will be the personal canvass which commences on 8 October 2015.

AUTHOR'S NAME, DIRECTORATE AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

Liz Read, Electoral Services Manager, Resources Directorate – 024 7683 3177

Phase 1 - Annual Household Canvass and Outreach (July – November 2015)

Our objectives	How we deliver it	The resources that we use	How we measure our success
Encourage householders to respond to obtain information to encourage individuals to register			
Emphasise the reasons why householders need to respond, including the legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet included with HEF (July/August), updated Electoral Services web pages (August), Facebook and Twitter updates (August/September), Cityvision • Promotional Event in West Orchards October Half Term • Production of 3 adverts which can be streamed, used on website, large screen televisions etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost included in HEF production costs • Support of Communications Team • Budget £5000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of responses to initial HEF • Number of website "hits" via the link to the election pages
Visit every non-responding property to obtain potential elector details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a recruitment plan to recruit canvassers across the city (June/July) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate canvass budget • Support of Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvassers employed to every area
Emphasise why people need to register themselves Individually even after responding to the HEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet included with HEF, Website, Facebook and Twitter update, adverts on street banners, posters in community buildings, libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed budget of £5000 • Support of Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual registration applications
Remind 18 year olds of their newly gained right to vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthday cards sent to every registered elector with an 18th birthday during the current electoral year (Dec-Nov) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed budget of £400 • Support of Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards sent in a timely manner prior to each birthday
Remind 16-18 year olds to register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact made with sixth forms (September) provision of information and visits – September 2015 • Data obtained from Education team on rising '18' year olds and sending of Invitation to register forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits provided by Electoral Services Team • Information sharing with Youth Service and Education teams • Costs included in the annual canvass budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of registered 16-18 year olds monitored • Feedback from schools

Undertake localised communications to target specific communities with the lowest response rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local groups to provide information and support • Target low responding areas with specific advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed budget of £1500 • Support of Communications Team
Promote and encourage registration from Coventry faith groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided to all registered groups and offers of support/resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal postage and printing cost • Free translated leaflets from Electoral Commission • Support of Equality & Diversity Officer
Provide information to students at both Coventry and Warwick Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Student Unions and University Accommodation Teams to provide information about voter registration along with links to registration webpage • Attendance at Freshers Fayres, Registration Days and other events the Universities are holding for students including adverts in Student Handbooks • Facebook and twitter campaign targeting Students – this will also be run again in February 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Services Team resource • Support of Communications Team • Budget of £500 encouragement activities • Budget of £3,000 for Facebook and Twitter campaign
Issue a press release detailing the registration process and the reasons why households should respond ASAP	<p>Press release issued to coincide with first delivery of registration forms</p> <p>Twitter and Facebook messaging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial cost • Support of Communications Team
Undertake activities as agreed in LDW programme	<p>Delivered during the nationally designated week (October)</p> <p>Promotional activities held at appropriate events</p> <p>Publicity of events to promote participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed budget of £2000

Phase 2 – Individual Registration Promotion and Outreach (January - March 2016)

Work to encourage Individual Electoral Registration			
Emphasise why people need to register themselves Individually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website, Facebook and Twitter update, adverts on street banners, posters in community buildings, libraries Radio Advertising Facebook and Twitter Advertising Hosting information desks at other Council events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed budget of £8000 Support of Communications Team Electoral services resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of individual registration applications Contact from potential electors

Phase 3 – Election Promotion and Outreach (March – May 2016)

Our objectives	How we deliver it	The resources that we use	How we measure our success
Encourage people to register to and to vote at the election 5 May 2016			
Emphasise the individual registration and postal vote application deadline	Advertising campaigns targeting wards with lowest turnout (late March), articles in partner publications (March/April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed budget of £3500 Support from Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely publication of adverts Number of articles monitored by Communications Officer Polling day questionnaire
Publicise the election as an event to remind electors to vote	A one week local radio campaign (week before election), Posters placed at polling stations (week before the election), Street banners (late April), a countdown button on the Council website along with Facebook and Twitter updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed budget of £5500 Support from Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of website "hits" via the link to the election pages Contact random venues to ensure the posters have been displayed Polling day questionnaire with specific questions about public awareness activities

Local Democracy Week 2015 – Proposed Timetable of Events

Monday 12 th October	Tuesday 13 th October	Wednesday 14 th October	Thursday 15 th October	Friday 16 th October
<p>Event: Virtual Council (GovernIT)</p> <p>Venue: Lord Mayor’s Hospitality Suite</p> <p>Time: 9.30am – 3pm</p> <p>Target audience: Mix of University students and college students</p>	<p>Event: Democracy Day</p> <p>Venue: Diamond Room 2</p> <p>Time: 9.00am – 4.00pm</p> <p>Target audience: Mix of University students and college students</p>	<p>Event: Lord Mayor for a Day</p> <p>Venue: Council House – various</p> <p>Time: 9.30am – 3.00pm</p> <p>Target audience: Pupils from Earlsdon Primary School</p> <p>Event: Question Time</p> <p>Venue: Council Chamber</p> <p>Time: 1.00pm – 3.00pm</p> <p>Target audience: University students - Politics</p>	<p>Event: Democracy Challenge</p> <p>Venue: TBC</p> <p>Time: 1.00 – 3.00pm</p> <p>Target Audience: Elected Member and students from colleges.</p>	<p>Event: Year 12 School Debating Competition</p> <p>Venue: Council Chamber</p> <p>Time: 1.00pm – 5.00pm</p> <p>Target audience: Year 12 Students</p>

Appendix 3 – Virtual Council Visual Aid



Round: 1



Appendix 2

Ward	Electorate as at 1/12/14	Electorate as at 1/6/15 **	Electorate as at 23/9/15	Electors Pending Deletion	Pending Electors	Unconfirmed Electors
Bablake	12716	12952	12793	132	472	260
Binley and Willenhall	12483	12656	12499	184	570	304
Cheylesmore	12170	12367	12157	147	592	323
Earlsdon	12296	12503	12341	159	530	397
Foleshill	12238	12385	12248	191	713	778
Henley	13634	13734	13526	149	590	440
Holbrook	12712	12919	12773	183	664	422
Longford	13676	13817	13653	184	588	391
Lower Stoke	14193	14792	14645	191	837	418
Radford	13191	13418	13232	184	679	572
Sherbourne	11927	12183	12119	176	610	334
St Michael's	10840	12224	12019	171	3147	855
Upper Stoke	13148	13340	13219	174	718	521
Wainbody	9556	11264	11124	88	1784	248
Westwood	12843	13259	13102	154	574	376
Whoberley	11645	12010	11826	194	588	544
Woodlands	13402	13772	13618	149	550	218
Wyken	13019	13080	12916	138	529	293
	225689	232675	229810	2948	14735	7694

**** Please note these figures will be inflated as people were registering in time for the election but people who had moved were not reviewed.**