



Reference: FOI-613

Request:

1. How many Voter Authority Certificates (VACs) has the council issued, how many applications has it rejected, and what is the demographic profile of those applications, both accepted and rejected?
2. Can you confirm that the Chief Executive, acting in their role as the Returning Officer, and/or the Elections Department of your council, has received guidance from the Electoral Commission and/or the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities about implementing the new voter ID legislation for the May 4th elections?
3. Can you confirm
 - a. all polling station staff have been trained on implementing the new processes and if so,
 - b. what that training has entailed?
4. Can you confirm whether the Chief Executive, in their role as Returning Officer, has presented a report on preparedness for the Voter ID requirements to the full council or any other appropriate committee of the council? Has this included a risk assessment and mitigation plan? (If yes, please can you supply a copy of that report?)
5. Can you confirm whether an audit has been undertaken of all proposed polling stations to identify a private room for those people who, for whatever reason, cover their faces in public? What was the outcome of this audit if it has happened? (For example, have any polling stations been found to be unsuitable, and if so, how many?)
6. Has the council undertaken a public information campaign to inform voters about the new Voter ID requirements?

Response:

1. An application for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) is made to the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) not the Authority, therefore the Authority has not issued any VAC's. However, for transparency, as at 23/02/2023, excluding archived applications, the Electoral Registration Office Portal (EROP) shows that the ERO has sent 69 Voter Authority Certificate applications to print and rejected seven. There is no requirement for the ERO to record the demographic profile of applications however, the [Voter Authority Certificate Performance Dashboard](#) provides the overall breakdown of age group.
2. The Authority have received guidance.

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3. As at 23/02/23, polling station staff have not yet been trained. Training will be provided in due course and will cover all aspects of the role, including but not limited to new voter ID and accessibility requirements.
4. A report has not been presented to full Council.
5. The Authority has not audited polling stations to identify a private room. However, arrangements are in the process of being made to ensure an area to allow privacy will be available in each polling station.
6. Yes.

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