

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 MARCH 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	ELECTORAL REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS UPDATE		
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 Further to Minute 46 of the Policy Committee meeting on 3 November 2014 this report provides an update on:

- The results of the 2014/15 annual canvass;
- The preparations and arrangements for the 2015 UK Parliamentary and Local Borough Elections to be held on Thursday 7 May 2015;
- The position regarding the development of Individual Electoral Registration.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the position be noted.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 This is the twelfth report reviewing the annual registration canvass and election processes.

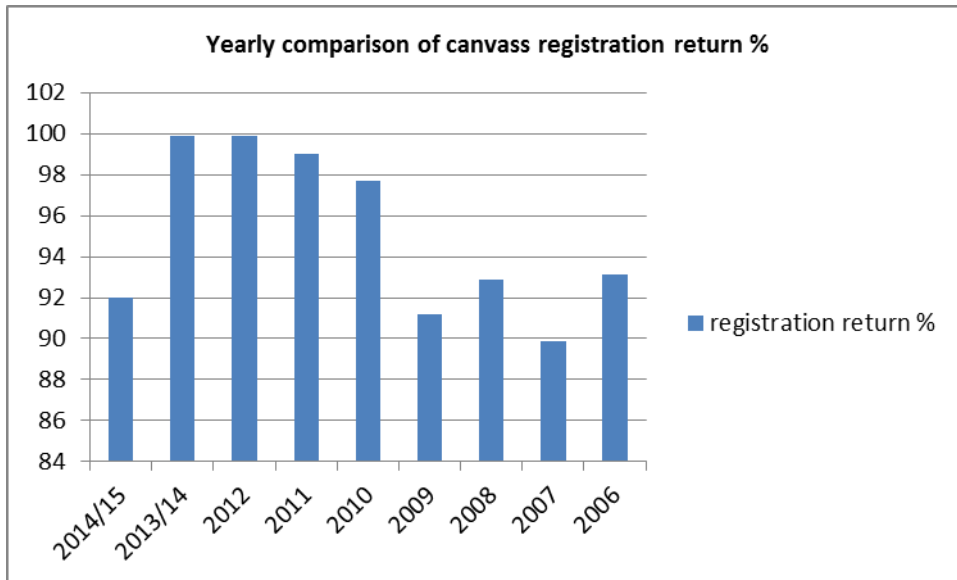
4. RESULTS OF THE 2014/15 CANVASS

4.1 The 2013/14 canvass had a registration return of 99.89%. The 2014/15 canvass had a registration return of 92.01%.

4.2 The 2013/14 canvass was extended. It commenced on 1 October 2013 and the register was published on 17 February 2014, the longest running canvass in the history of Electoral services. The 2014/15 canvass commenced with a Confirmation Live Run of the Electoral Database on 10 June 2014. The information on electors held on the database was

automatically and digitally compared with the DWP records. 69.8% of electors' names on the register matched with the Government records. These electors remained registered and confirmation letters were sent to them to inform them that they needed to take no further action.

- 4.3 The complete details of the numbers of responding electors, by polling district and ward, are attached at **Appendix A**.



- 4.4 The later 2014 annual audit, known now as the 2014/15 audit, commenced on 9 September 2014 and ended on 1 December 2014, when the 2015 Electoral Register was published. The canvass commenced on 6 October 2014 and ended on 20 November 2014.

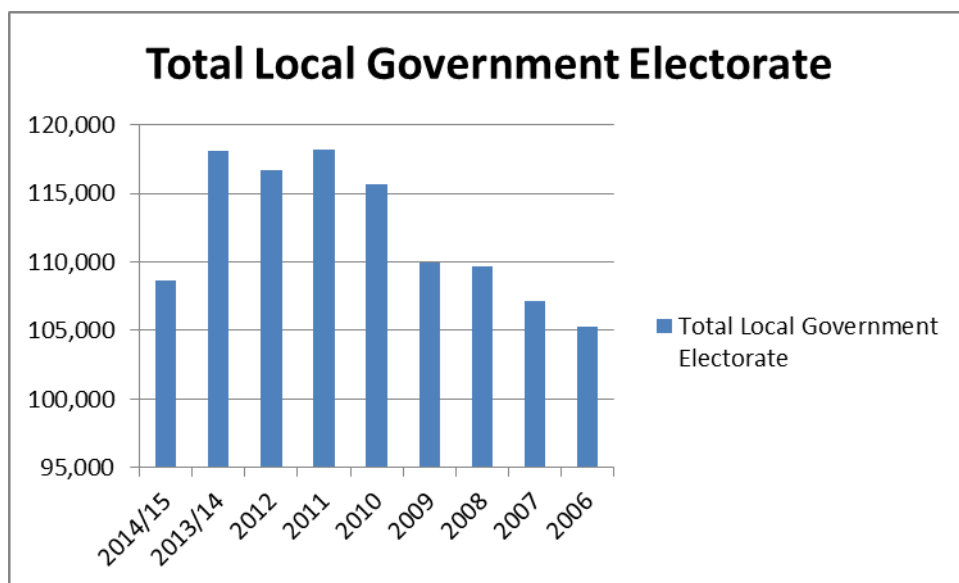
- 4.5 The total eligible electorate in the Borough in the 2015 Register published on 1 December 2014 was: 108,633.

At the end of the 2013/14 canvass it was:	118,060
At the end of the 2012 canvass it was:	116,722
At the end of the 2011 canvass it was:	118,219
At the end of the 2010 canvass it was:	115,622
At the end of the 2009 canvass it was:	109,955
At the end of the 2008 canvass it was:	109,654
At the end of the 2007 it was:	107,191
At the end of the 2006 it was:	105,278

- 4.6 There are two main reasons for this decrease in the local electorate, both of which are directly related to the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). These are explained at paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 under. The Electoral Services Team started data-matching locally as a procedure during the canvass in 2010, increasing the data matching

weeks from 2010. We had returns from 61,829 properties in 2013 compared to 56,964 in 2009, the last year that data matching was not employed routinely as a canvass procedure. The comparison shows a difference of 4,865 additional returns, a percentage difference of 7.86%.

- 4.7 The Electoral Services Team previously commenced data-matching locally and manually with the Academy database (Council Tax) at around the same time as canvassers go out and knock on doors. This action was normally taken in addition to the automatic data-matching exercise. Under the rules governing Individual Electoral Registration, this was not appropriate action this year as it is not possible to simply match a name and address from Council Tax any more. If the elector details have not matched during the Confirmation Live Run, the elector is required to register individually, either on-line or by completing a Household Enquiry Form, listing the people living in the property, with each resident then registering on line or additionally completing an Invitation to Register form. This seems to be the main reason for the drop in the total eligible electorate on the 2015 published register (published 1 December 2014).
- 4.8 The second was the difficulty of registering students in advance of the canvass end in November, which was shortly after University students take up residence. Although the University of Reading was kind enough to obtain the more detailed list of students, containing names, addresses, nationalities and dates of birth of students in halls at the University, they were unable to submit National Insurance numbers, and the lists were received less than a week in advance of publication of the Register.
- 4.9 The Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission instructed that, statutorily, if a name was on the Register and the elector had not returned a registration form for 2014/15, their registration could be carried forward to the 2015 published register. So, the previous names of students that were included in the 2014 Register were duly carried forward to the 2015 Register. New students' names could not be automatically added to the published register. The exercise to add new students' details and delete details of students who had moved out of Halls, took place after publication of the 2015 Register. Each student who is qualified to vote had their name added to the database. In order then to become registered under IER, each student was then sent an Invitation to Register personally. In addition, a "super" canvasser knocked on the doors of students in private accommodation to encourage them to complete an Invitation to Register form. Once confirmation had been received from two sources and by comparing the names of the students who had moved out of halls with existing Government records, the names of the students who had moved on were deleted from the student property records on the Electoral Database. This system did not occur in the 2013/14 canvass.



4.10 As mentioned above, the registration return for the 2014/15 canvass was 92.01%. In 2013/14, when allowance was made for void and business premises (6,606 or 10.68%), the level of registration was **99.89%**. In 2012, when allowance was made for void and business premises (5,974 or 8.82%) the level of registration was **99.88%**.

Year	Returns	Percent
2013/14	68,507	99.89%
2012	67,622	99.88%

4.11 In previous years, the rate of return from Reading electors could be measured by the total number of properties where the “head of household” had either responded in writing, telephone, internet or text, regarding the number of people resident and qualifying to vote in that property. In 2014/15 eligible members of the public needed to register to vote individually. For the first time, people could make their application to register by using a quick and secure online service: [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote). Electors were required to provide their own individual name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number. Please see examples of previous monitoring statistics under. The statistics drawn from the 2014/15 canvass cannot, because of the changes above, be compared in the same way.

4.12 In 2014/15, because applications to register must now be made individually, measurement of the progress of the canvass cannot be compared with previous years. The Electoral Commission acknowledges that the published register is simply a snapshot of the number of electorate on the date of publication and the number changes constantly as people choose to register on-line.

4.13 In 2013/14 data-matching was again employed in order to ensure a high percentage of returns from properties. Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Registration Officer to take all steps that are necessary for the purpose of maintaining the electoral register.

4.14 As a result, in 2013/14 the Electoral Services team was able to ensure that registration checks were run on 99+% of properties. The team continued to run extensive checks on non-

responding households against other data sources held by the Council, including the Council Tax database and the tenancy register, PlanWeb (property maps), and Council property lists. In 2014/15, although the same checks could be made, it was not possible to register a person to vote until they had provided their name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number, either on-line or by completing a registration form, and those details matched with the Government data. So even if it was apparent from comparison with the, for example, Council Tax database, that the previous householder had been replaced with a new householder, the new name could not simply be added to the register. A household enquiry form had to be sent to the address for completion followed by invitations to register to individuals within that household. The route of manual local data-matching could therefore only be followed in order to check upon an elector, not to actually register them and add them to the electoral register.

- 4.15 The 2014/5 canvass was therefore undertaken knowing that the percentage of registration would be considerably lower than previous years and an estimate of 87% registration was the revised target. The Electoral Services Team therefore was proactive in targeting Nursing Homes and student private accommodation with “super” canvassers. Notification of the names of students in halls has been received from two separate sources and students have been issued with Invitation to Register forms (ITRs). Students cannot automatically be registered without a completed ITR or registration on line but, to date, Electoral Services have registered 1,342 students out of a total of approximately 5,000. Electoral Services had a stall at the Freshers’ Fayre event twice and an additional student event following the Freshers’ Fayre. Student literature included the message that it is important to register to vote at their Uni. To date, Electoral Services has been successful in registering approximately 50% of Nursing Home residents.
- 4.16 The table entitled: “Total Number of Responses from Canvassers” below summarises the response to the canvass compared to previous years. In 2014/15, the door-to-door canvass generated responses from 11,096. These were either completed Household Enquiry Forms or completed Invitation to Register forms. There is no guarantee that the receipt of the form successfully lead to a registration to vote. An additional 26,348 forms were successfully delivered. It can only be estimated what the total of registrations under IER were as a result of the door-to-door canvass. Given the above return and delivery figures, an approximate estimate of a total of registrations of 15,400 is realistic. A visit from a canvasser or a delivered form could have encouraged to people to go online and register also. In 2013/14, the door-to-door canvass generated responses from 19,324 properties, compared to 25,899 received by post and 12,977 by phone, web or text.
- 4.17 Any direct refusals were noted by canvassers on their canvasser log books. They were cross-referenced daily against other Council databases, so that there was a minimal number of outstanding non-registrations in respect of people refusing to complete forms on the doorstep. In 2015 it is possible to carry forward a previously registered elector.
- 4.18 A Hearing and Appeals process will be necessary in future in order to confirm someone is still registered at an address and the potential for fines to be chargeable for non-registration will need to be considered and a system planned, introduced, maintained and evaluated regarding charging fines for non-registration.

- 4.19 Door-to-Door Canvass: The 2013/14 door-to-door canvass followed a new timetable, as indicated above, and covered 13 weekends. The canvassers were asked to return to properties where they could not get a response.
- 4.20 The 2014/15 door-to-door canvass commenced on 11 October 2014 and finished on 20 November 2014. Canvassers were given an assortment of HEF (Household Enquiry Forms) and ITR (Invitation To Register) Forms. Full explanations and briefings were given on a one-to-one basis regarding IER, types of forms and the new processes. Canvassers were made aware that local data-matching would take place in Electoral Services, to meet statutory requirements. The automatic data-matching took place in advance of the canvass, and approximately 9,000 Electoral database records matched with the Council Tax database. Data-matching also took place with the National Fraud Initiative database. It is planned in future for the software suppliers, Express, to initiate the capability to match records with the DVLA database, Blue Badge database and payroll database, amongst others.

4.17 Total Number of Responses from Canvassers per Year.

Year	Total Number of Responses from Canvassers
2014	15,400
2013	19,324
2012	14511
2011	19575
2010	18249
2009	17208
2008	12096
2007	5124

- 4.18 In 2014/15 and 2013/14, we used 22 teams of canvassers (as against 27 in 2012, 33 in 2011, 30 in 2010, 29 in 2009, and 35 in 2008). The performance of the teams was monitored twice-weekly. In the latter weeks of the canvass, teams were diverted to wards and polling districts recording lower levels of responses, and the Electoral Services Team data-matched non-responding properties with other Council's databases.
- 4.19 In 2014/15 the total cost of the door-to-door canvass was £35,000, in 2013/14, the total cost of the door-to-door canvass was £46,242.
- 4.20 Payment was by results: £2.00 per team for each completed form returned, or 50p per team per each reminder form posted, plus transport costs.
- 4.21 The total budget for the door-to-door canvass in 2014/15, 2013/14, 2011 and 2012 was the same as in 2010, that is, £50,000, plus £56,000 for postage. Office staff were brought in on a temporary basis in order to data-match locally.
- 4.22 As in previous years, door-to-door canvassing was not employed in Mapledurham ward, where the first reminders were sent by post. Non-returning properties were followed up by office checks against other Council databases.

## Total Electorate

4.23 The Table below sets out the changes to the Electoral Register by ward - Borough Electorate.

Ward	2014/2015	2013/14	% Difference
Abbey	8,093	9,535	-15.12%
Battle	7,167	7,717	-7.13%
Caversham	7,008	7,484	-6.36%
Church	8,030	8,364	-3.99%
Katesgrove	6,184	7,047	-12.24%
Kentwood	7,085	7,485	-5.34%
Mapledurham single member ward	2,513	2,502	+0.43%
Minster	7,001	7,728	-9.04%
Norcot	7,099	7,525	-5.66%
Park	6,047	7,403	-18.31%
Peppard	7,482	7,631	-1.95%
Redlands	6,207	7,323	-15.23%
Southcote	6,401	6,556	-2.36%
Thames	7,376	7,459	-1.11%
Tilehurst	6,989	7,256	-3.67%
Whitley	7,951	8,461	-6.02%
	108,633	117,496	-7.54%

4.24 These electorate figures are an important indicator of comparative ward size. The Local Government Boundary Commission advises that ward sizes should be within a range of +/- 5% of the average. In Reading, the above figures give an average electorate for a 3-Member ward of 7,074 (2,513 for a single Member ward). On this basis, 13 of the 16 wards are within the tolerance range; and three are outside - Abbey (12.59% over), (11.90% over) and Whitley (11.03% over). Electoral Services receive notifications of future developments and these are taken into account when the Polling District reviews are undertaken. The last polling station review was completed in advance of the publication of the register on 1 December 2014.

## Absent Votes

4.25 In 2014/15, the number and percentage of absent voters on the register were 16,688 (15.36%). In 2013/14, the number and percentage of absent voters on the register was 16,757. A total of 1,006 electors were unconfirmed with postal votes and these electors were written to immediately after publication of the register to let them know they had foregone their postal votes.

4.26 In January 2015, October 2013 and January 2012 the personal indicators were refreshed for postal voters who had a postal vote for five years. This was the third time that this exercise

was undertaken since the introduction of personal indicators being a requirement in order to have a postal vote, back in 2007. Postal voters were asked to re-submit their signatures and dates of birth. Any postal voter not responding after the required two reminders will have their postal vote deleted.

- 4.27 Under the Electoral Registration (Disclosure of Electoral Registers) Regulations 2013, all existing postal voters must be registered individually in order to retain their postal vote following the publication of the revised register by 1 December 2014. Nobody will be able to vote by post at any election held after this date unless they are registered individually.
- o Applicants for an absent (postal) vote must have made a successful new application for registration or had registration confirmed.
  - o Entitlement to an absent vote will cease after the first new canvass if no successful new application for registration or confirmation of registration.
- 4.28 Therefore, electors who registered in 2013/14 but who have not registered or matched under IER in the 2014/15 registration, have been included in the register published on 1 December 2014, and therefore will be able to vote in person at their polling station on 7 May 2015; but if they were previously also postal voters, they will have lost their postal vote from 1 December 2014. Under the rolling register arrangements, electors in this position will be able to submit a new IER registration, up to 20 April 2015, and if they also want a postal vote on 7 May 2015 they will have to make a fresh postal vote application by 21 April 2015.

#### Attainers

- 4.29 Attainers are rising voters aged 16 and 17. In 2007 the registration form was redesigned specifically to place focus on any rising voters living in the property, aged 16-17, who could be added to the Register with the date on which they would attain the age of 18. The responses in recent years have been as follows:

Year	Aged	Number	Percent
2011	Aged 16/17	1,131	0.95%
2012	Aged 16/17	713	0.61%
2013	Aged 16/17	980	0.83%
2014	Aged 16/17	1,048	0.96%

#### Nationality of Electors

- 4.30 Following the Electoral Administration Act 2006, the canvass form routinely requires an elector to specify their nationality. 13% of the local electorate have not registered themselves as UK citizens (allowing for unknowns), with 83 nationalities being recorded. Other than UK, the biggest nationality groups are India (2.2%), Poland (1.8%) and The Irish Republic (1.3%). Table 6 below is a summary.



## Nationality Breakdown 2008 - 2011

	2008	%	2009	%	2010	%	2011	%
UK	93,199	85.0	94,514	85.6	96,968	83.7	97,525	82.7
India	2,175	2.0	2,383	2.2	2,614	2.2	2,955	2.5
Poland	1,870	1.7	1,993	1.8	2,141	1.8	2,523	2.1
Rep. Ireland	1,376	1.3	1,361	1.2	1,471	1.3	1,536	1.3
Pakistan	918	0.8	967	0.9	1,101	0.95	1,375	1.1
Undeclared	1,972	1.2	1,237	1.1	2,965	2.6	3,224	2.7

## Nationality Breakdown 2012 - 2014

	2012	%	2013	%	2014	%
UK	95,697	81.8	96,246	81.91	94,372	86.87
India	2,774	2.3	2,972	2.53	2,479	2.28
Poland	2,529	2.1	2,648	2.25	2,528	2.32
Rep. Ireland	1,515	1.2	1,536	1.30	1,504	1.38
Pakistan	1,282	1.0	1,400	1.19	1,243	1.14
Undeclared	4,416	3.7	4,268	3.63	3,218	2.96

In 2014/15 there were 8,192 (7.54%) European Union nationals on the register. In 2013/14 there were 7,983 European Union nationals on the register (5.97%). This is not including citizens of the Irish Republic, Cyprus or Malta.

### Open Register

4.31 In 2014/15, 57,486 (31.82%) electors opted out of the open register. In 2013/14 48,212 (40.83%) electors opted out of the (what was referred to as) edited register. In 2012, a total of 56,836 electors opted out of the edited register (48.6%).

### Electoral Commission Performance Standards

4.32 Reading achieved "Above" all the 2011, 2012, 2013/14 and 2014/15 Canvass Performance Standards (a total of 10 Standards).

4.33 The initiatives employed by the Electoral Services Team to increase the accuracy of the register routinely include:

- Organising a stall at the University of Reading Freshers' Fayre in 2010, 2011 2013/14 and 2014/15. Students are encouraged on the importance of registering to vote, and can have an RBC data wrist band if they complete an Invitation to Register form or vote online. Laptops were available for them to be able to do so. 1,342 students are green RAG registered to date on the 2015 Register out of a potential for a further approximate 2,500 potentially eligible students.
- Registration Posters are translated into Polish and Urdu and are distributed to local Polish and Urdu communities with additional registration forms encouraging registration to vote.

- Reading supports School Elections every October, providing advice, ballot boxes and Polling Booths to enable the elections to take place.
- Door-to-door canvassers are provided with Translation Booklets to enable communication with all nationalities and communities when encouraging residents to complete their registration forms.

4.34 Feedback and evaluation exercises are conducted at the end of every canvass when the statistics, Door-to-Door Canvasser comments and the Audit Team input are reviewed and an action plan drawn up so that further and continuing improvements can be made in following years, and an achievable higher target agreed.

## 5. UK PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL BOROUGH ELECTIONS 7 MAY 2015

5.1 In Reading, the Local Returning Officer will undertake the normal election arrangements for voters. The electorate will vote at their normal polling station and the Electoral Services team will issue postal votes.

5.2 For the UK Parliamentary Election, Reading is responsible for two constituencies: Reading East and Reading West. For the Local Borough Elections, all Wards except Mapledurham will have elections. Reading will take on ballot boxes and postal votes from West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils in respect of the Wards in Reading East and Reading West that cross Reading boundaries. The first meeting of the Electoral Services Managers in Berkshire took place in September and December 2014 and February 2015. Communication is strong between the Local Authorities so that arrangements can be agreed between the authorities concerned.

5.3 The UK Parliamentary and Local Borough Elections will be held on Thursday 7 May 2015.

5.4 The Notice for the UK Parliamentary Elections will be published after the dissolution of Parliament and receipt of the Writs for Reading East and Reading West constituencies. The Notice for the Local Borough Elections will be published on Wednesday, 25 March 2015. Nominations can be received from Tuesday, 26 March 2015. This is when the local election purdah period will commence. The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers for the UK Parliamentary Elections and Local Borough Elections will be 16.00 on Thursday 9 April 2015.

5.5 The Notice for the UK Parliamentary Election will be published on Tuesday, 31 March 2015. Parliament will be dissolved on Monday, 30 March 2015 and the Writs will be received on Tuesday, 31 March 2015. Nominations for the UK Parliamentary Election can be received from Wednesday, 1 April 2015.

5.6 The last day for new or changed registrations will be midnight on Monday, 20 April 2015 and for new or changed applications for new postal votes, will be 17.00 on Tuesday, 21 April 2015.

5.7 Postal ballot packs will be issued from 22 April 2015.

- 5.8 Poll cards will be issued around 25 March 2015 in order to allow electors reasonable time to contact the Electoral Services team to make late requests for postal votes by 21 April 2015. Postal poll cards will be issued to people with postal votes.

#### Verification and Counts

- 5.9 The UK Parliamentary and Local Borough Verification exercise will be held in the Bowls Hall, Rivermead (Reading East) and the Sports Hall at Rivermead (Reading West), from 22.01 on Thursday, 7 May 2015.
- 5.10 The Verification will be conducted from Close of Poll overnight. Cross boundary ballot boxes will be received from Wokingham (Reading East) and West Berkshire (Reading West) Councils. Ballot boxes in respect of both elections will be delivered to Rivermead, as normal.
- 5.11 The Reading East and Reading West constituencies' Counts will commence once Verification is completed per Count table and well within the 4 hour after Close of Poll guideline that the Electoral Commission recommends.
- 5.12 The UK Parliamentary Counts are expected to end after Declaration of results for both constituencies at approximately 07.00 on Friday, 8 May 2015.
- 5.13 The Local Borough Election Count will commence at 12.00 noon on Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The estimated time of the last declaration is 16.00 later in the day.

## **6 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (IER) - BACKGROUND AND UPDATE**

- 6.1 In June the electoral registration system in Great Britain changed to the new system called 'Individual Electoral Registration'. Previously, the 'head of household' was responsible for registering everyone who lived at the address, now every individual is responsible for their own voter registration.
- 6.2 Electoral Services wrote out to Reading's registered electors after the Southcote By-Election on 24 July 2014. 70% of people who were already registered to vote were registered automatically under the new system. 30% of people on the 2014 electoral register could not be automatically registered under IER. This is because they could not be matched against government records and therefore could not be registered on the 2015 register.
- 6.3 Electors received either a registration confirmation letter or an Invitation to Register. If an elector received an Invitation to Register, they were required to provide additional information in order to be registered.
- 6.4 Electors were and are being encouraged to register online by going to Register to vote page on the Reading website and the Government website. Alternatively they can request and complete a hard copy registration form. The branding is now as follows:



- 6.5 As mentioned above, an absent voter must be registered under IER in order to keep their postal vote in 2015. Therefore electors who have not registered under IER, and whose names have been carried forward on the electoral register, will be able to vote in person at polling stations on 7 May 2015, but have lost their postal vote, and will have to register under IER and re-apply for their postal vote in order to get it back.

## MAYORAL PETITIONS

7. Under the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (England) Regulations 2000, the number of signatures required to make a Mayoral petition valid is 5% of the number of local government electors shown in the Electoral Register on 17 February 2014. The threshold figure for determining the validity of any petition is 5,431.
8. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**
- 8.1 The electoral registration process and elections support the promotion of the participation of Reading people in local democracy.

## 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Following the initial communications plan in 2010 which adopted a “Your Vote Counts” campaign, Electoral Services continues to promote participation in the democratic process by:
- Production of posters in A4 and A3 size, in English, Polish and Urdu, circulated to all on the Promotion Team’s circulation list (all RBC venues, libraries, leisure centres etc)
  - A Communications Plan composed in liaison with the Promotions Team to include press releases and press articles to coincide with the start of the door-to-door Canvass, the run-up to the election to ensure maximum registration, explanations of IER, dates to take note of in the run-up to elections.
  - Targeted registration of university students
  - Posters printed in Polish and Urdu delivered to local shops and community centres
- 9.2 Encouragement to Register: As in previous years, in 2015 Reading is proactive in contacting Reading University and the Students’ Union. Initiatives include:
- Putting information about electoral registration on the big screen in the Students’ Union building
  - Including information about electoral registration in the Students Union newsletter
  - Putting the information on the University student home page
  - Including information about registration on the Students’ Union web page
  - Attendance at the Freshers’ Fayre to promote personal registration by students
- 9.3 Electoral Services meet with the Promotions team regularly. They have added the IER branding and press updates to the website at set phases and in internal publications.
- 9.4 The Anti-Fraud department have a list of unconfirmed electors and are checking with their databases in order to confirm whether they still live at the same addresses. This is an expensive exercise needs to be targeted.
- 9.5 Household Notification Letters were issued to all Reading Households in the week commencing 16 February 2015. The letter informed the electors at the property of who was registered there and to contact Electoral Services regarding any changes. To date, the Electoral Services Team has processed approximately 2,000 changes as a result of the write out.
- 9.6 Approximately 20% of Reading’s electorate are temporary residents and live at a property for approximately 6 weeks. According to Council Tax records, Reading has the highest number of movers nationwide. These are the people that Electoral Services chase in order to register them.
- 9.7 At publication date, 1 December 2014, Reading had 11,669 unconfirmed electors. At the last register update there were 7,488 unconfirmed electors This figure includes the unconfirmed students whose number totals approximately 3,700.

9.3 Reading schools held their annual elections in October/November 2014 with support from Electoral Services. The team continues to liaise regularly with the Youth Parliament regarding the electoral process.

9.4 The cost of the press activity was approximately £5,000 in 2014 and will be a similar figure in 2015.

## 10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The electoral registration process is prescribed by the Representation of the People Act 1983, in particular Sections 8-17. Section 10 governs the maintenance of registers and the annual canvass. The Electoral Registration Officer is required to carry out an annual canvass and all individuals have a duty to complete and return the electoral registration form.

10.2 Section 10(A) - and Regulations 33 and 34 - provide for the carry forward and removal of names from the register. Where the Electoral Registration Officer is unable to confirm, during the annual canvass, that a registered elector was resident because the canvass return was not returned or because he has obtained insufficient other information to indicate residence, then the ERO will carry forward that elector's entry on the electoral register until the publication of the 2015 register. In advance of the UK Parliamentary Election in 2015, anybody who was registered during the last canvass before the introduction of IER will retain their vote for the 2015 UK Parliamentary Election whether they were confirmed on the registers during the Confirmation Live Run or not. The criteria for remaining on the register has not changed as a result of IER.

10.3 Under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations in 2006, from September 2006 the duty on the ERO is to take all necessary steps to maintain the Electoral Register (Reg. 9). This includes making house-to-house enquiries on one or more occasion; and inspecting any records held by any person which the ERO is permitted to inspect under any enactment or rule of law.

10.4 Under the Electoral Registration (Disclosure of Electoral Registers) Regulations 2013:

- o There will be no automatic removal of electors from the electoral register in the run-up to the 2015 elections; but
- o An absent voter must be registered under IER in order to keep their absent vote in 2015.

## 11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The 2014/15 budget for electoral registration is £294.6k. Of this, the door-to-door canvass cost in 2014 was £53k, as against budget provision of £50k.

11.2 Government funding of £110,000 has been received from the Cabinet Office for 2014/15 and further funding of £84,000 has been confirmed for 2015/16, for the additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration.

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Representation of the People Acts - Summary of Register of Electors 2007.