

Motion to Council, 25th January, 2023

Elections Act 2022

This Council notes that following amendments to the Elections Act made in Parliament in December, the Government intends to press ahead with the requirement of voters to produce photographic identification at polling stations in England and Wales before being issued with a ballot paper, to take effect from May 2023.

Council believes that these measures are totally unjustified given the extremely rare cases of voter fraud, and expresses its deep concern that the requirements will lead to voter suppression, disenfranchising marginalised sections of our community.

Council is further concerned that our staff will be placed in the invidious position of having to refuse to issue a ballot paper to those unable to produce acceptable identification, will have to decide as to whether the identification is valid, and will be placed in unacceptable conflict situations by having to refuse residents their right to vote.

As a result, council shares the concerns raised by charity groups and other campaigning organisations about the adverse impact on older people, young people and those without the financial means to obtain the prescribed identification.

It further shares the concerns raised by the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Local Government Association that there is insufficient time to implement voter identification and issue the new Voter Authority Certificates before May 2023.

Council therefore resolves to write to our local Members of Parliament to voice our concerns and opposition to this barrier to universal suffrage urging its repeal; and to the Minister for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to urge that the measures be delayed to enable the changes to be adequately communicated, the necessary training of staff to take place and for the required financial support to be in place, ensuring that voting remains accessible to all.

Proposed- Councillor Angela Turner.

Seconded- Councillor Harry Hancock.