

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE
15 JANUARY 2014

30 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

A Report by the Director of Public Health/ Head of Policy and Performance provided a detailed account of a Scrutiny Review which considered Wirral's preparations for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014. Members heard how the introduction of IER was a government initiative to transfer the existing property- based electoral register to a new register which would rely on individuals registering themselves.

The Chair of the IER Scrutiny Review Panel addressed the Committee. A vote of thanks was expressed to all that had been involved with the piece of work. It was identified that while the accuracy of Wirral's Electoral Register was above the national average, some trends had been identified, particularly in the more deprived areas of the Borough in relation to inaccuracies. The positive aspects of cross party working was then highlighted.

Other Members of the IER Scrutiny Review Panel present endorsed comments made by Councillor Stapleton.

A Member highlighted concerns with paragraph 3.3 of the report whereby it was reported that in some wards, notably those with higher levels of known deprivation, there would be a higher proportion of voters not automatically transferred onto the register. The question was raised as to what could be put in place to alleviate this problem.

The Project Coordinator Policy and Performance Manager clarified that work will be undertaken to canvass targeted areas. A test run had been conducted that had proved successful. The Head of Legal and Member Services commented that the Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission will be co-ordinating and launching a national campaign and the Council will look to undertake a targeted awareness campaign aimed at specific areas within electoral wards as required.

A Member suggested that a campaign on local radio be launched to encourage the public to ensure they are on the electoral register. It was suggested that the campaign should include information about the negative effect on personal credit ratings and the ability to gain credit if an individual is not on the electoral register.

A Member raised concerns about members of the public who will continue to be excluded. It was stated that this should be raised at Cabinet level. It was then suggested that any costs involved for radio campaigns could be shared with neighbouring authorities.

Another Member suggested that the Council's current IT systems continue to be looked at so data can correspond with gaps on the register.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Members of the Committee note the contents and recommendations of the report.**
- (2) That Members agree that the report be referred to Cabinet.**