

Service being assessed	Elections
Who will be involved in completing this assessment?	Linda Mockford, Service Manager Licensing & Elections
Date of Review	19 July 2011
Date of Next Review	19 July 2012
What is the purpose of the service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make sure everyone who is eligible to vote is registered to vote by compiling, publishing and maintaining the electoral register in accordance with statutory requirements</li> <li>• To carry out elections and referenda in accordance with legislation</li> <li>• To keep polling districts and places under review to ensure that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all electors in the Borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and</li> <li>• so far is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to all electors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To identify and implement measures to encourage and enable greater electoral participation</li> </ul>

<p>Is this assessment being undertaken because of changes to the service? If so what are they?</p>	<p>Assessment being undertaken as part of Council's annual review of equalities information, not because of change to service/policy.</p>
<p>The purpose of this review is to understand how services can help the Council to meet its duties under Equalities legislation. The duties can be summarised as</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate discrimination</li> <li>2. Advance equality of opportunity</li> <li>3. Foster good relations between different parts of the community</li> </ol> <p>How does this service help the Council to do this, in particular in relation to the categories specifically mentioned in legislation - Race, Gender/Sex, Disability, Age, Religion/Belief, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy &amp; Maternity and in respect of Duty 1 only – Marriage and Civil Partnerships?</p>	<p>Most of the work carried out by the team is determined by national legislation. For example, the signage at polling stations, size and colour of voting papers and notifications of elections.</p> <p>A review of Polling Stations, which is undertaken every 4 years, is currently underway. The team have advertised the review in the local residents' magazine, with press releases, on the council website and is advertising for comments through the local voluntary sector networks in the hope of reaching as many parts of the community as possible.</p> <p>Elections are held every year. As part of the project plan, issues from previous elections are reviewed and solutions put in place for the next election. For example, parking cones placed at a polling station to ensure that parking spaces are always available for disabled drivers / voters. The team visit each proposed polling station prior to the election to ensure that the premise, access, proposed staffing levels, storage facilities, etc are all suitable for voters and to comply with legislation. Following one or two complaints from parents about the disruption caused, the team try to avoid using schools as polling stations. However, if a school has to be used as there is no alternative rather than close the school, extra staff are allocated to the station to ensure that the entrances and exits are kept safe for the young people onsite.</p> <p>Briefings are organised for potential candidates and agents on how to apply and what to expect during the pre-election phase.</p> <p>Household registration form: people can return their registration information online, by text, by telephone, by post or by personal visit to the Council offices. In areas of low return, personal canvassers are appointed to visit the area and try to increase registration / awareness of the right to vote. A booklet, in several languages, accompanies the canvassers to help explain the process to people who do not have English as their first language.</p>

	<p>Within the polling station, Presiding Officers are trained in how to assist the visually impaired on how to use selector tools to vote and wheelchair accessible booths are standard in each station.</p> <p>Events have been held in local colleges to raise awareness amongst young people and a birthday card is sent to them on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to remind them to register / vote in future elections. Events have also been held in the Market Place to raise public awareness of the importance of registering to vote.</p> <p>Postal votes are readily available and visits can be made upon request if the person is vulnerable or requires assistance in order to vote.</p>
<p>How will you know that service is working as it should?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of complaints</li> <li>• Feedback from voters, staff, candidates and agents</li> </ul>
<p>What data have you used to help you make this assessment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation / statute</li> <li>• Electoral register / canvass information collected</li> <li>• Nomination forms</li> </ul>
<p>Is there any additional data that you need to collect to help in continuous improvement?</p>	<p>Not at this current time.</p>
<p>How have you ensured that this service has been designed from a customer's perspective and how have you involved customers in that process?</p>	<p>The service is heavily controlled by legislation. Customer feedback on any issues arising from the use of polling stations is incorporated into the planning for the next year's election.</p>

<p>Has any other consultation been carried out, including to ensure that we have taken into consideration the needs of those not currently using the service?</p>	<p>The team regularly review ways in which to increase voter registration and will try different techniques (for example visiting the local college and providing personal canvassers) to try to ensure that anyone who is eligible is registered.</p>
<p>What is, or what do you expect to be the impact of the way you work on different parts of the community, including those covered by equality legislation?</p>	<p><b>Who benefits?</b> Candidates and their agents; Voters; Norfolk County Council, Parish Councils and Central Government as we run their elections</p> <p><b>Who should be expected to benefit but don't – Why not?</b> People who are eligible to vote but do not take advantage of the opportunity to register</p>
<p>On the basis of what you have found out, which of these options will you now follow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No major changes</li> <li>• Adjust the policy</li> <li>• <b>Continue the policy</b></li> <li>• Stop and remove the policy</li> </ul> <p>This is a review – not a new policy or service. As and when it is proposed to change the service or policies, new assessments will be completed.</p>
<p>What now needs to be done and by who?</p>	<p>Results of the Polling Station review will be circulated to all respondees and published on the website in due course. A list of improvements / changes will be implemented in time for the next election in May next year.</p>
<p>Signed off by</p>	<p>Linda Mockford, Service Manager Licensing &amp; Elections</p>