

**Gravesham Borough Council**  
**Development of the Corporate Risk Register for 2022-2023**

<b>The Risk</b>					<b>Implementation of the Elections Act 2022</b>					<b>Risk No.</b>							
<b>Link to Corporate Objective</b>					#1 People: a proud community; where residents can call a safe, clean and attractive borough their home. #2 Place: a dynamic borough; defined by a vibrant and productive local economy taking advantage of growth in the area, supported by its strong and active community. #3 Progress: an entrepreneurial authority; commercial in outlook and committed to continuous service improvement, underpinned by a skilled workforce and strong governance environment.												
<b>Assessment Date</b>					October 2022												
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>					Full Council												
<b>Risk Owner(s)</b>					Chief Executive and Returning Officer												
<b>INHERENT RISK SCORE</b>					<b>RESIDUAL RISK SCORE</b>					<b>TARGET RISK SCORE</b>							
Likelihood	5	Impact	3	Score	15	Likelihood	5	Impact	2	Score	10	Likelihood	5	Impact	1	Score	5
<b>Lead Officer (s)</b>										<b>Target Date</b>							
Simon Walsh, Service Manager (Communities)										5 May 2023							

Trigger	Consequences	Mitigation / Control
Secondary legislation not in place to inform planning for May 2023	<p>Risk mitigations and choices being made uninformed (see also comms risk)</p> <p>The Returning Officer may struggle to deliver the elections they have personal responsibility for e.g., electors prevented from voting leading to a challenge to the way the poll was conducted. Potential errors leading to lack of confidence in the administration of the poll and the result.</p> <p>The risk of challenge by petition after the election will be higher</p> <p>Election outcome is open to challenge e.g., electors not being issued with electoral identity documents and being unable to vote</p> <p>The democratic legitimacy of the Council might be undermined hindering its ability to fulfil its role.</p> <p>Reputational damage for the local authority</p> <p>If election results are challenged via electoral petition, council decision making maybe affected.</p>	External dependency on Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) delivery

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Electoral Commission Guidance not in place to inform planning for May 2023	<p>Election outcome is open to challenge e.g., electors not being issued with electoral identity documents and being unable to vote</p> <p>Failure to deliver polling e.g., electors prevented from voting leading to a challenge to the way the poll was conducted. Potential errors leading to lack of confidence in the administration of the poll and the result. Reputational damage for the local authority</p>	External dependency on DLUHC delivery
Too much workload on Electoral Services Officers	<p>Stress/ sickness absence</p> <p>Unable to process applications in a timely manner.</p> <p>Disenfranchised electors (with disproportionate impact on certain demographics and deprived areas)</p> <p>Reputational damage, increased costs, Impact on election capacity, Impact on other activities</p>	<p>Additional officer support to be allocated to the elections team to increase capacity</p> <p>Inbuilt resilience in sharing workload across the electoral service.</p>
ICT System failure (Government Portal for Voter ID)	<p>Unable to process applications and/or authorised IDs incorrectly</p> <p>Centralised printing of Voter ID document is disrupted and therefore not despatched in timely fashion to electors</p> <p>Disenfranchised electors (with disproportionate impact on certain demographics and deprived areas)</p> <p>Reputational damage</p> <p>Increased workloads and costs</p> <p>Impact on election capacity</p> <p>Electoral Fraud</p>	<p>External dependency on DLUHC delivery</p> <p>Training of staff will be conducted once the system information is available.</p> <p>Additional officer support to be allocated to the elections team to increase capacity</p> <p>Ability to issue temporary electoral identity documents in contingency situations where the usual determination, printing and distribution process is disrupted.</p>
Quality of product (Voter ID document) is not fit for purpose	<p>Voter ID document becomes damaged or unusable prior to election</p> <p>Voter ID document is forgeable for use in a polling station</p> <p>Increased workload/failure demand</p> <p>Disenfranchised electors</p> <p>Impact on Local Election results and election integrity</p>	<p>Extensive training package to be put in place (reliant on secondary legislation, guidance and training packages being available)</p> <p>The ERO will have the ability to allow the appointment of an emergency proxy for that polling day.</p> <p>Electoral identity document expected to be an A4 paper-based document with inherent security features</p> <p>Ability to issue temporary electoral identity documents in contingency situations where the usual determination, printing and distribution process is disrupted.</p> <p>Increased polling staffing levels for May 2023 elections</p>

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Communications are not effective (Comms Risk)	<p>Increase in voter ID requests leading to being unable to process applications in a timely manner (see above)</p> <p>Electors do not need to apply for Voter ID (as they already have suitable photographic ID)</p> <p>Elector assumes Poll Card Letter is ID</p> <p>Electors do not realise they need ID and do not like being challenged in the station</p> <p>Electors being potentially disenfranchised</p>	<p>External dependency on Electoral Commission on delivery of comms (who are in turn dependent on DLUHC delivering)</p> <p>Utilise internal comms team as far as able to - but reliant on secondary legislation and guidance being in place.</p> <p>Ahead of the introduction of the voter identification requirement, the Electoral Commission will carry out a wide-reaching public awareness campaign (from early 2023) to ensure voters understand the change and to support continued participation in the electoral process.</p> <p>The EC's advertising campaign will be designed to reach the public and, as the majority already have an eligible form of photographic identification, it will focus on raising awareness of the change and serve as a reminder to those in election areas</p>
Additional Responsibilities for polling staff	<p>Increased difficulty in recruiting (particularly presiding officers) and increased training requirements (including for experienced staff)</p> <p>Risk to election delivery</p> <p>Increased issues in polling stations etc.</p> <p>Unable to deliver polls</p>	<p>Increase polling staffing levels for May 2023 elections</p> <p>DLUHC funding provision</p> <p>Extensive training package to be put in place (reliant on secondary legislation, guidance and training packages being available)</p> <p>Contact staff early for May 2023 (underway), to inform planning</p> <p>Put all council teams and staffing on standby to assist if required</p>
Increased serious polling station incidents due to additional 'challenge point' of ID	<p>Increased resourcing requirement on police. Police unable to respond to serious incidents as occupied elsewhere</p> <p>Risks to staff safety - Difficulty recruiting new staff or retaining experienced staff</p> <p>Staff are put in dangerous situations</p>	<p>Increase polling staffing levels for May 2023 elections</p> <p>DLUHC funding provision</p> <p>Extensive training package to be put in place (reliant on secondary legislation, guidance and training packages being available)</p> <p>Make early contact with police to discuss resourcing and cover</p>
Poll card changes (to an A4 letter) lead to increased costs and confusion	<p>Electors are confused, voter ID vs Poll 'card', do not recognise poll card as its changing form (so it is not opened or disposed of)</p> <p>Turnout is impacted, including postal votes</p> <p>Costs of elections increase due to postage costs changing</p> <p>Election integrity questioned and risks of challenge increase</p> <p>Political fallout and reputational damage</p> <p>Impact on council's finances if not covered by a DLUHC indemnity</p>	<p>Communications required (see Comms Risk)</p> <p>DLUHC dependency</p> <p>Additional officer support to be allocated to the elections team to increase capacity</p>

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<b>Key corporate documents and processes in place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corporate Business Plan 2019-2023</li><li>• Elections Project Plan and Risk Register</li></ul>
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