

Council
23 July 2015

7. Questions from Councillors

Question from Councillor Rodney Bates to the Leader

'The Electoral Commission has produced a report into the transition to individual electoral registration and found that 1.9 million people are only retained due to the transitional arrangements. Previously, the Electoral Commission estimated that the number of people not correctly registered at their current address is around 7.5 million across the UK. The end of transitional arrangements is currently planned for December 2016 although the government can choose to bring this forward to December 2015.

- (A) What steps are being taken within this Council to ensure that as many residents as possible are registered to vote?
- (B) Would the Leader agree with me that it is important that local residents are not disenfranchised from the democratic process and therefore speak with our local MP and the LGA to encourage the transitional arrangements to remain until December 2016?

Answer from the Leader

- (A) *The Electoral Registration Officer has advised me that 98.94% of the Borough's electorate of 65,916, is registered under Individual Electoral Registration (IER). The 1.06% not confirmed under IER, and only retained due to the transitional arrangements, represents 700 electors, some of whom haven't yet reached 18. These 700 electors have had multiple reminders and personal visits since July last year. These electors will continue to receive reminders and personal visits until the transitional period ends.*

*In August this year, Household Enquiry Forms will be sent to **all** properties in the Borough, including new and vacant properties. If there is no response, this form will be followed up with 2 reminders and a personal visit.*

The IER Engagement Strategy, to encourage residents to register, includes information sent out with Council tax bills, adverts on local radio, publicity on the Council's website and social media.

- (B) *I agree that it is important that local residents are not disenfranchised from the democratic process. However, John Penrose MP, Minister for Constitutional Reform at the Cabinet Office, announced in Parliament, on 16 July 2015, that he will be bringing forward the end date for the transition to Individual Electoral Registration to December 2015.*