

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 NOVEMBER 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	ELECTORAL REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS - UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR LOVELOCK	PORTFOLIO:	LEADERSHIP
SERVICE:	ELECTORAL SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH-WIDE
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 Further to Minute 10 of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting on 7 November 2012 this report provides an update on:

- The results of the 2013/14 annual canvass;
- The arrangements that were made in respect of the 2014 European Parliamentary and Local Borough Elections held on Thursday 22 May 2014;
- The preparations and actions taken in respect of the later 2014 canvass;
- The position regarding the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the position be noted.

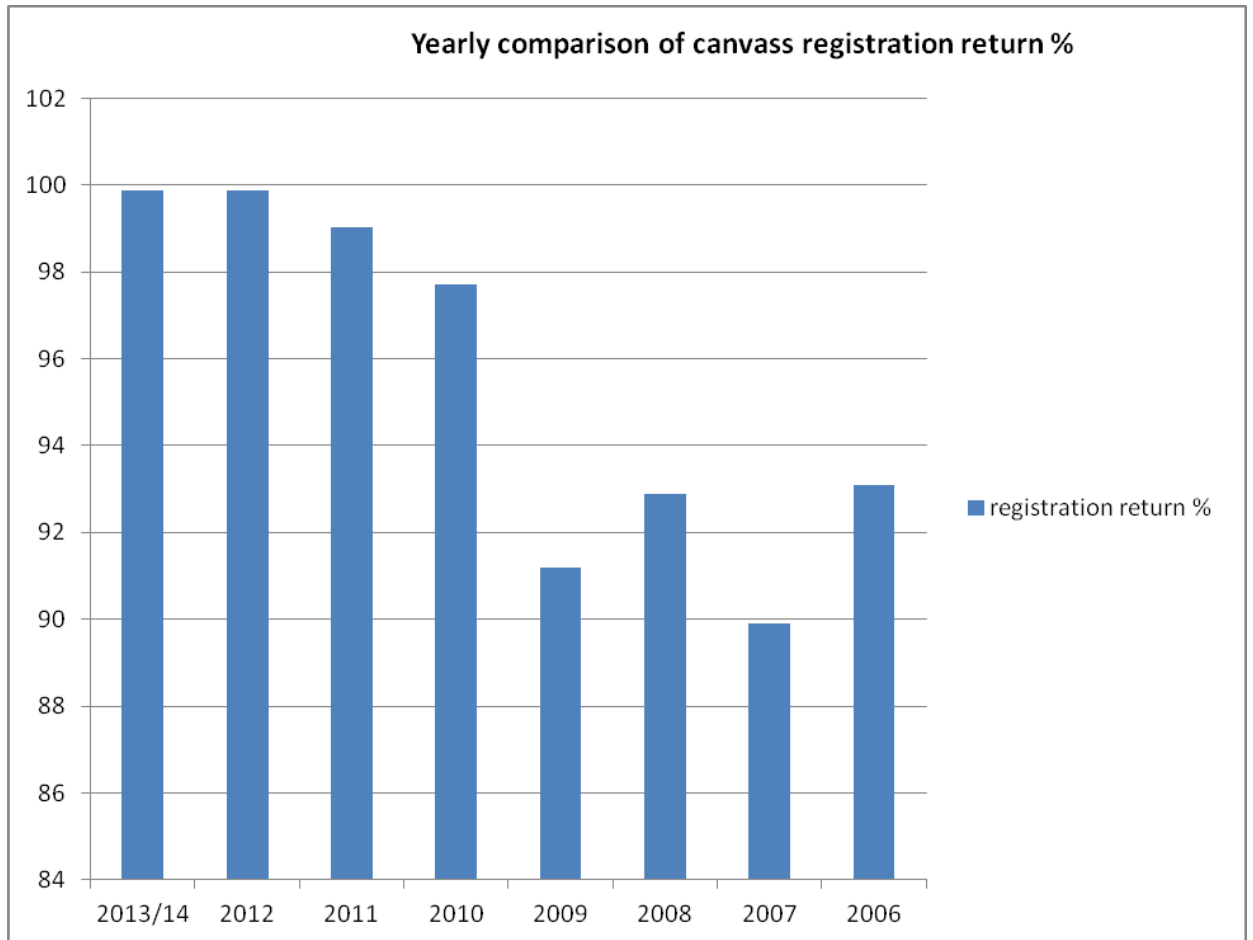
3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 This is the eleventh report reviewing the annual registration canvass and election processes.

4. RESULTS OF THE 2013/14 CANVASS

4.1 The 2014 canvass had a registration return of 99.89%. The 2013 canvass had a registration return of 99.88%.

- 4.2 The 2012 canvass commenced earlier and was compressed into a smaller and different part of the electoral year than had historically been the case. The 2013/14 canvass was extended. It commenced on 1 October 2013 and the register was published on 17 February 2014, the longest running canvass in the history of Electoral services.
- 4.3 The complete details of the numbers of responding properties and electors, by polling district and ward, are attached at **Appendix A**.



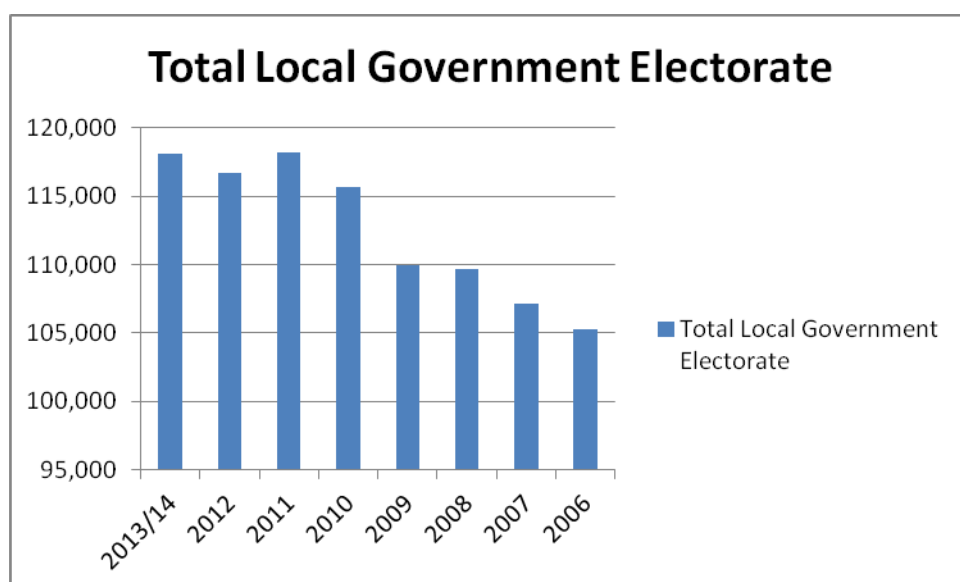
- 4.4 The later 2014 annual audit commenced on 9 September 2014 and will end on 1 December 2014. The door-to-door canvass started on 6 October 2014 and will end on 20 November 2014. The 2013/14 annual audit commenced on 1 October 2013 and ended on 17 February 2014. The door-to-door canvass commenced on 28 November 2013 and ended on 6 February 2014. The 2012 annual audit commenced on Friday, 6th July 2012 and ended on Wednesday, 10th October 2012: the canvass had to be brought forward because of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections to be held on 15th November 2012.

- 4.5 The total local government electorate in the Borough in the new February 2014 Register was: **118,060**

At the end of the 2012 canvass it was:	116,722
At the end of the 2011 canvass it was:	118,219
At the end of the 2010 canvass it was:	115,622
At the end of the 2009 canvass it was:	109,955

At the end of the 2008 canvass it was:	109,654
At the end of the 2007 canvass it was:	107,191
At the end of the 2006 canvass it was:	105,278

- 4.6 Therefore, the 2014 register showed an increase in the local electorate of 1,338 (1.15%) compared with 2012, where there had been a decrease in the local electorate of 1,497, or 1.26%. The 2011 register showed an increase in the local electorate of 2,953, or 2.49%. Comparison of the 2014 total electorate figure with the 2010 total electorate figure shows a net gain over four electoral years of 2,438 (2.11%).
- 4.7 There was a property registration response increase of 0.85% in 2012, but a decrease of 1,497 electors on the 2012 electoral register. The main reason for these statistics was analysed in detail in the 2012 canvass report and related to the difficulty of registering students in advance of the canvass end in October, which is when University students take up residence. This did not occur in the 2013/14 canvass, as the dates of the canvass captured the student registrations.



- 4.8 In 2011, Reading received responses from 61,548 households out of a property database of 67,513 (91.2%). In 2012, Reading received responses from 61,648 households out of a property database of 67,697 (91.1%). In 2013/14, Reading received responses from 61,829 households out of a property database of 68,507 (90.25%).

Year	Responses	No. of Properties on database	Percent
2013/14	61,829	68,507	90.25%
2012	61,648	67,697	91.1%
2011	61,548	67,513	91.2%
2010	58,424	67,262	86.9%
2009	56,965	66,759	85.3%
2008	56,958	66,144	86.1%

- 4.9 In 2013/14, 12,977 (20.98%) of the responses were by phone, internet or text. In 2012, 13,473 (19.9%) of the responses were by phone, internet or text. In 2011, 13,907 (20.59%) of the responses were by phone, internet or text. These facilities were available to

households where there was no change of circumstance; the ability to text was new in 2008. The breakdown of previous years' responses is given below.

	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Phone	4,625	5,224	5,435	(6,015)	(4,886)
Web	6,793	6,689	6,928	(6,087)	(5,475)
SMS/Text	<u>1,559</u>	<u>1,560</u>	<u>1,544</u>	<u>(1,561)</u>	<u>(1,084)</u>
TOTAL	12,977	13,473	13,907	(13,673)	(11,445)

- 4.10 In 2013/14, when allowance is made for void and business premises (6,606 or 10.68%), the level of registration increases to 68,507 returns or **99.89%**. In 2012, after allowance for void and business premises (5,974 or 8.82%) the level of registration increased to 67,622 returns or **99.88%**. The comparison over previous years is:

Year	Returns	Percent
2013/14	68,507	99.89%
2012	67,622	99.88%
2011	66,860	99.03%
2010	65,666	97.60%
2009	60,914	91.20%
2008	60,969	92.18%
2007		89.80%
2006		93.10%

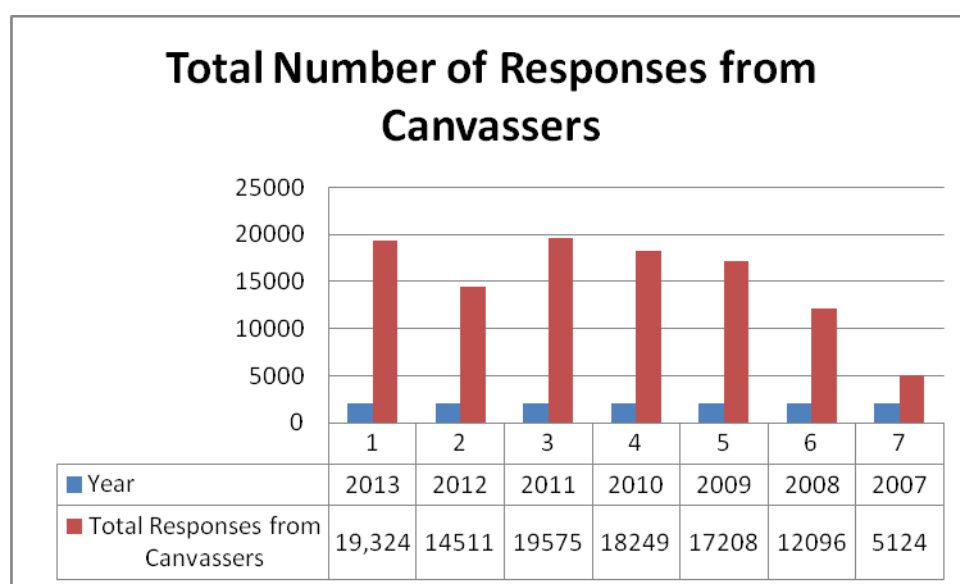
- 4.11 The 2013/14 canvass was undertaken to a project plan agreed in May 2013 which set an objective of securing responses from at least as many achieved in 2012. This was achieved: 99.89% in 2013/14 against 99.88% in 2012.
- 4.12 In 2012, because of the early and more compressed audit/canvass period, we project-planned for less capacity to receive returns from Reading properties. At week five of the canvass, data-matching of properties against other Council databases commenced. This was five weeks earlier than in 2011 and the aim was to capture as many "returns"/data-matches from properties as possible to ensure an accurate and up to date Register in advance of the PCC elections.
- 4.13 In 2013/14 we again employed data-matching in order to ensure a high percentage of returns from properties. Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Registration Officer to take all steps that are necessary for the purpose of maintaining the electoral register.
- 4.14 As a result, in 2013/14 the Electoral Services team was able to ensure that registration checks were run on 99+% of properties. The lowest response rate was in Katesgrove BB polling district - 75.1% - but when voids were added in, the response rate here rose to 92.81%. The team continued to run extensive checks on non-responding households against other data sources held by the Council, including the Council Tax database and the tenancy register, PlanWeb (property maps), and Council property lists.

Door-to-Door Canvass

- 4.15 In 2013/14, the door-to-door canvass generated responses from 19,324 properties, compared with 25,899 received by post and 12,977 by phone, web or text. In 2012, the door-to-door canvass generated responses from 14,511 properties, compared with 23,261 received by post and 13,473 by phone, web or text. The comparison with previous years is as follows:

Year	Response from Canvass text	Response from Post	Response from Phone, web, text
2013/14	19,324	25,899	12,977
2012	14,511	23,261	13,473
2011	19,575	26,145	13,907
2010	18,249	25,038	13,673
2009	17,208		

- 4.16 Any direct refusals were noted by canvassers on their canvasser log books. They were cross-referenced daily against other Council databases, so that there were no outstanding non-registrations in respect of people refusing to complete forms on the doorstep.
- 4.17 The 2013/14 door-to-door canvass followed a completely new timetable, as indicated above, and covered 13 weekends. The canvassers were asked to return to properties where they could not get a response.



- 4.18 Most wards showed an improved response rate, which reflects the more pro-active approach to achieving a high percentage of registration returns running parallel with data-matching.
- 4.19 In 2013/14, we used 22 teams of canvassers (as against 27 in 2012, 33 in 2011, 30 in 2010, 29 in 2009, and 35 in 2008). The performance of the teams was monitored twice-weekly. In the latter weeks of the canvass, teams were diverted to wards and polling districts recording lower levels of responses, and the Electoral Services Team data-matched non-responding properties with other Council's databases.

4.20 In 2013/14, the total cost of the door-to-door canvass was £46,242. In 2012, the total cost of the door-to-door canvass £37,631. Previous years' comparisons are as listed under:

Year	Total Cost of Canvass
2013/14	£46,242
2012	£37,631
2011	£51,617
2010	£49,239
2009	£48,445

Payment was by results: £2.00 per team for each completed form returned, or 60p per team per each reminder form posted, plus transport costs.

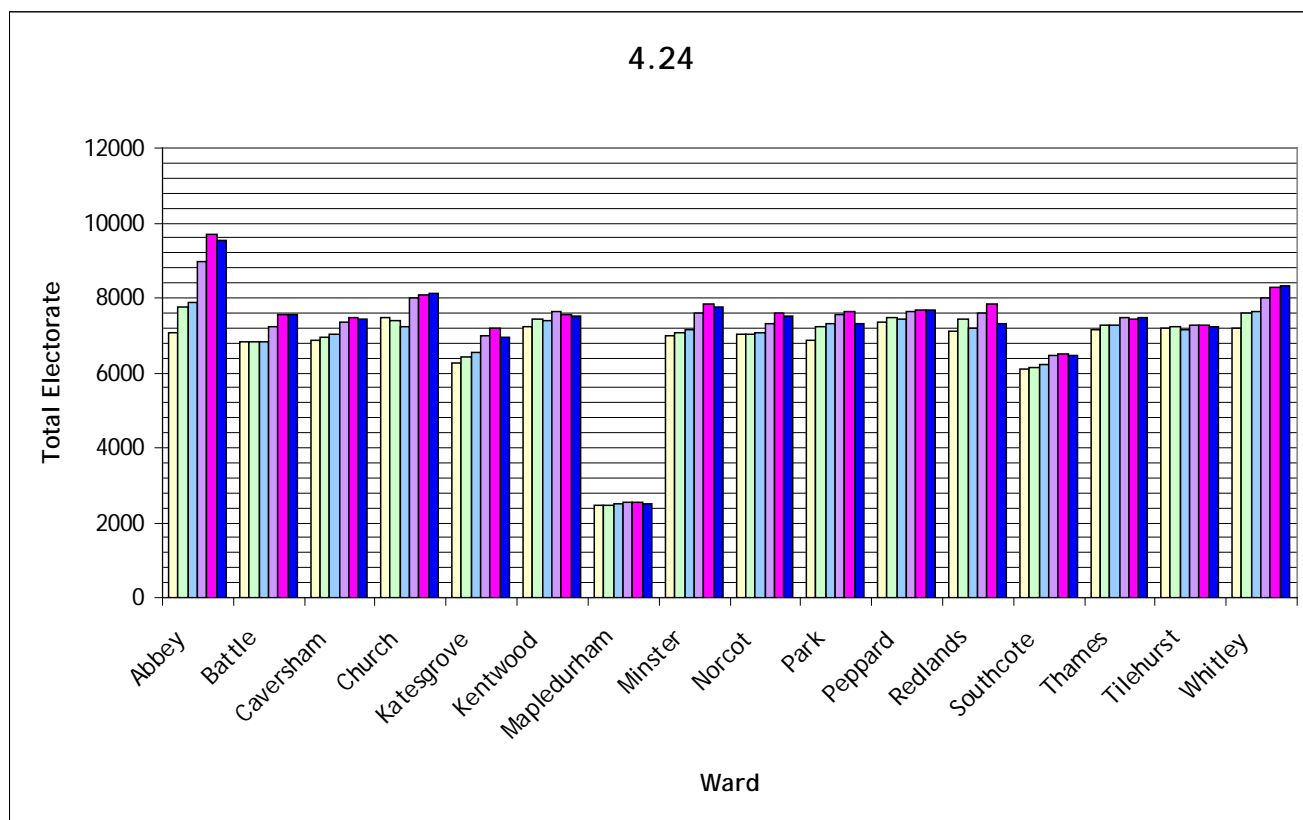
4.21 The total budget for the door-to-door canvass in 2013/14 was the same as in 2012, 2011 and 2010, that is, £50,000, plus £56,000 for postage. Office staff were brought in on a temporary basis in order to data-match.

4.22 As in previous years, door-to-door canvassing was not employed in Mapledurham ward, where the first reminders were sent by post. Non-returning properties were followed up by office checks against other Council databases, and a 100% return was again achieved.

Total Electorate

4.23 The Tables below sets out the changes to the Electoral Register by ward. The furthest column to the right shows the % increase in eligible electorate (Local Elections) from 2008 to 2013, which, in Reading was a total increase in all wards of 9.0%.

Ward	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	+/- 10-13	% + 10-13	+/- % '08-'13
Abbey	7757	7890	8984	9711	9517	9562	+578	+6.64	+23.26
Battle	6836	6822	7230	7548	7538	7968	+738	+10.20	+16.55
Caversham	6964	7041	7345	7488	7448	7548	+203	+2.76	+8.38
Church	7374	7247	7992	8076	8125	8493	+501	+6.26	+15.17
Katesgrove	6412	6537	7002	7183	6942	7257	+255	+3.64	+13.18
Kentwood	7432	7400	7622	7575	7515	7463	-159	-2.08	+0.42
Mapledurham	2462	2517	2542	2543	2518	2542	0	0	+3.24
Minster	7052	7169	7585	7843	7753	7687	+102	+1.34	+9.00
Norcot	7020	7078	7329	7581	7521	7556	+227	+3.09	+7.63
Park	7216	7297	7574	7647	7309	7204	-370	-4.88	-0.67
Peppard	7467	7444	7624	7685	7662	7645	+21	+0.27	+2.77
Redlands	7418	7212	7585	7828	7333	7375	-210	-2.77	-0.57
Southcote	6151	6219	6460	6506	6484	6570	+110	+1.70	+6.78
Thames	7260	7287	7487	7450	7481	7469	-18	-0.24	+2.87
Tilehurst	7232	7157	7278	7287	7252	7246	-32	-0.43	+0.19
Whitley	7601	7638	7983	8270	8324	8475	+492	+6.16	+11.49
	109,654	109,955	115,622	118,221	116,722	118,060	+1,100	0.95	+7.48



4.24 These electorate figures are an indicator of comparative ward size. The Local Government Boundary Commission advises that ward sizes should be within a range of +/- 10% of the average. In Reading, the above figures give an average electorate for a 3-Member ward of 7,700 (2,566 for a single Member ward). On this basis, 14 of the 16 wards are within or at the tolerance range; and two are outside: Abbey (24.18% over), and Southcote (14.67% under). Electoral Services receive notifications of future developments and these are taken into account when the Polling District reviews are undertaken. A Polling District review has recently been completed and reported to Council on 21 October 2014. The last one was completed in 2011.

4.25 Each year the Local Government Boundary Commission ("LGBC") look at each Authority's canvass returns. If the LGBC considers a review is required it will write to the Council giving notice that the LGBC will carry out a review.

Absent Votes

4.26 In 2013/14, the number and percentage of absent (postal) voters on the register was 16,757. The total number of absent voters was 15,990 in 2009, 16,703 in 2010, 17,373 in 2011, and 17,436 in 2012. The number of absent voters on the register has therefore decreased by 679 (-3.89%) compared with 2012. The percentage of postal voters is 14.2%, compared with 14.9% in 2012 and 14.6% in 2011.

4.27 In October 2013 and January 2012 the personal indicators were refreshed for postal voters who had had a postal vote for five years. This was the second time that this exercise had been undertaken since the introduction of personal indicators being a requirement in order to have a postal vote, back in 2007. Postal voters were asked to re-submit their signatures

and dates of birth. Any postal voter not responding after the required two reminders had their postal vote deleted. The total number of postal voters on the register following completion of the PI Refresh in March 2012 was: 17,295.

Attainers

- 4.28 Attainers are rising voters aged 16 and 17. In 2007 the registration form was redesigned specifically to place focus on any rising voters living in the property, aged 16-17, who could be added to the Register with the date on which they would attain the age of 18. The responses have been as follows:

Year	Aged	Number	Percent
2007	Aged 16/17	1,631	1.5%
2008	Aged 16/17	1,736	1.6%
2009	Aged 16/17	1,408	1.3%
2010	Aged 16/17	1,904	1.6%
2011	Aged 16/17	1,131	0.95%
2012	Aged 16/17	713	0.61%
2013	Aged 16/17	980	0.83%

Nationality of Electors

- 4.29 Following the Electoral Administration Act 2006, the canvass form routinely requires an elector to specify their nationality. In 2013 13% of the local electorate have not registered themselves as UK citizens (allowing for unknowns), with 83 nationalities being recorded. Other than UK, the biggest nationality groups are India (2.5%), Poland (2.2%) and the Irish Republic (1.3%). The Tables below are a summary.

Nationality Breakdown 2008 - 2011

	2008	%	2009	%	2010	%	2011	%
UK	93,199	85.0	94,514	85.6	96,968	83.7	97,525	82.7
India	2,175	2.0	2,383	2.2	2,614	2.2	2,955	2.5
Poland	1,870	1.7	1,993	1.8	2,141	1.8	2,523	2.1
Rep. Ireland	1,376	1.3	1,361	1.2	1,471	1.3	1,536	1.3
Pakistan	918	0.8	967	0.9	1,101	0.95	1,375	1.1
Undeclared	1,972	1.2	1,237	1.1	2,965	2.6	3,224	2.7

Nationality Breakdown 2012 - 2013:

	2012	%	2013	%
UK	95,697	81.8	96,115	81.41
India	2,774	2.3	2,972	2.51
Poland	2,529	2.1	2,648	2.24
Rep. Ireland	1,515	1.2	1,536	1.30
Pakistan	1,282	1.0	1,400	1.18
Undeclared	4,416	3.7	3,057	2.58

4.30 In 2013/14 there were 7,983 European Union nationals on the register (6.76%). In 2012 there were 7,056 European Union nationals on the register (6.03%), not including citizens of the Irish Republic, Cyprus or Malta. In 2011 there were 7,046 European Union nationals on the register (5.97%).

Edited Register

4.31 In 2013/14 48,212 (40.83%) electors opted out of the edited register. In 2012, a total of 56,836 electors opted out of the edited register (48.6%). In 2011, a total of 57,236 electors opted out of the edited register (48.4%).

Electoral Commission Performance Standards

4.32 Reading achieved "Above" all the 2011, 2012 and 2013/14 Canvass Performance Standards (a total of 10 Standards).

4.33 The initiatives employed by the Electoral Services Team to increase the accuracy of the register routinely include:

- Organising a stall at the University of Reading Freshers' Fayre in 2010, 2011 and 2013/14. Students are encouraged to complete a short quiz on the importance of registering to vote, to win an RBC data wrist band (over 250 additional students were registered in Reading Borough; and a further 150 (approx.) additional Wokingham-based students registration forms were forwarded to Wokingham to add to their register).
- Registration Posters are translated into Polish and Urdu and are distributed to local Polish and Urdu communities with additional registration forms encouraging registration to vote.
- Reading regularly has an advertisement in the local Polish press encouraging people to register to vote.
- Reading supports School Elections every October, providing advice, ballot boxes and Polling Booths to enable the elections to take place.
- Door-to-door canvassers are provided with Translation Booklets to enable communication with all nationalities and communities when encouraging residents to complete their registration forms.

4.34 Feedback and evaluation exercises are conducted at the end of every canvass when the statistics, door-to-door canvasser comments and the Audit Team input are reviewed and an action plan drawn up so that further and continuing improvements can be made in following years, and an achievable higher target agreed.

5. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL BOROUGH ELECTIONS 22 MAY 2014

5.1 The European Parliamentary and Local Borough Elections were held on Thursday 22 May 2014.

5.2 The Notice for the European Parliamentary Elections was published on Friday, 11 April 2014. The Notice for the Local Borough Elections was published on Monday 14 April 2014. This was when the local election purdah period commenced. The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers for the European Parliamentary Elections and Local Borough Elections was 16.00 on Thursday 24 April 2014.

- 5.3 The last day for new or changed registrations was midnight on 6 May 2014, and for new or changed applications for new postal votes, was 17.00 on 7 May 2014.
- 5.4 Postal ballot packs were issued on 2 May 2014 and a second issue went out on 12 May 2014.
- 5.5 Poll cards were issued on 10 April 2014 in order to allow electors reasonable time to contact the Electoral Services team to make late requests for postal votes by 7 May 2014. Postal poll cards were issued to people with postal votes.

Verification and Counts

- 5.6 The European and Local Verification exercise was held in the Sports Hall at Rivermead, from 22.01 on Thursday, 22 May 2014.
- 5.7 The Verification was conducted from Close of Poll overnight with the Regional Returning Officer authorising the Verification total by 02.40 on Friday, 23 May 2014.
- 5.8 The Local Count commenced at 11.00 on Friday, 23 May 2014 and the last Ward declaration was by 14.00 on Friday, 23 May 2014.
- 5.9 The European Parliamentary Count commenced at 16.00 on Sunday, 25 May 2014 and the Reading party totals were approved by the Regional Returning Officer at 21.05 that evening.

6. UK PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL BOROUGH ELECTIONS - 7 MAY 2015

- 6.1 On Thursday 7 May 2015, there will be a UK Parliamentary Election and Local Borough Elections in Reading on 7 May 2015.
- 6.2 In Reading, the Local Returning Officer will undertake the normal election arrangements for voters. The electorate will vote at their normal polling station and the Electoral Services team will issue postal votes.
- 6.3 For the UK Parliamentary Election, Reading is responsible for two constituencies: Reading East and Reading West. For the Local Borough Elections, all Wards except Mapledurham will have elections. Reading will take on ballot boxes and postal votes from West Berkshire and Wokingham Councils in respect of the Wards in Reading East and Reading West that cross Reading boundaries. The first meeting of the Electoral Services Managers in Berkshire took place in September 2014 and a further meeting will take place in December so that arrangements can be agreed between the authorities concerned.

6.4 Voting

The first-past-the-post voting system will be in place for the UK Parliamentary and Local Borough Elections, as usual.

6.5 The Verifications and Counts

Ballot boxes in respect of both elections will be delivered to Rivermead, as normal.

Verification will take place from 22.01 on Polling Day. Ballot boxes from Polling Stations in Reading East (Wokingham) and Reading West (West Berkshire) will be delivered to Rivermead also. The Verification for Reading East and Wards in Reading Borough situated in Reading East will take place in the Bowls Hall; verification for Reading West and Wards in Reading Borough situated in Reading West will take place in the Sports Hall, Rivermead.

6.6 The UK Parliamentary Count and the Local Borough Count

Once verification of all ballot papers (including West Berkshire District and Parish and Wokingham District elections) is complete for the first Ward in Reading East and Reading West, the UK Parliamentary Election Count will begin. This means that some Count tables will still be verifying and others will be counting. The estimated time of the last declaration is 06.00 on Friday, 8 May 2015.

6.7 The Local Borough Election Count will commence at 12.00 noon on Friday, 8 May 2015. The estimated time of the last declaration is 16.00 later in the day.

6.8 The Notice for the elections will be published by 27 March 2015. The deadline for the delivery of nomination papers for the elections will be 16.00 on 9 April 2015.

6.9 The last day for new or changed registrations will be midnight on 20 April 2015, and 17.00 on 21 April 2015 for new postal votes.

6.10 Postal ballot packs will be issued around 17 April 2015 with a second issue following after 20 April 2015.

6.11 Poll cards will be issued on 26 March 2015 in order to allow electors reasonable time to contact the Electoral Services team to make late requests for postal votes by 21 April 2015. Postal poll cards were issued to people with postal votes.

7. INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

7.1 In June the electoral registration system in Great Britain changed to the new system called 'Individual Electoral Registration'. Previously, the 'head of household' was responsible for registering everyone who lived at the address, now every individual is responsible for their own voter registration.

7.2 Electoral Services have been writing, and continue to write, to Reading's registered electors from July 2014. Most people who were currently registered to vote were registered automatically under the new system. They will not need to do anything and will continue to be registered to vote as usual. A minority of people on the electoral register have not been automatically registered under the new system. This is because they have not been matched against government records and therefore cannot be transferred automatically to the new register.

7.3 Electors received either a registration confirmation letter or an Invitation to Register. If an elector received an Invitation to Register, they were required to provide additional information in order to be registered.

- 7.4 Electors are being encouraged to register online by going to register to vote page on the Reading website and the Government website. Alternatively they can return the completed paper form enclosed with their letter.

The branding is as follows:



If you do not get a letter you may not be registered, you can check by calling Election Services on 0118 937 3717 or go online to register.

[Register to vote online \(external website\)](#)

Household Enquiry Forms have already been sent out to those properties which are showing as empty on the Register.

Further information

If you'd like to know more about the changes to the electoral registration system visit Your vote matters on Gov website.



- 7.5 The next register is due to be published on 1 December 2014. To date, there are 70% of Reading electors who have been automatically re-registered successfully and a further 7,000 changes have been made to the register to date. There are a further 7,297 awaiting processing on the system today. In addition, Electoral Registration is hoping to automatically data-match with the NFI, Academy and Housing Benefit databases to achieve an additional 8,000 electors. These actions should bring the percentage of registration up to 83%. The remaining 17% equates to 20,000 electors, in order to bring the total number of electors up to 118,000 that were registered in February 2014.
- 7.6 The process of registering an elector means that once the details have been matched with the DWP, we are experiencing approximately 65% of downloads that are RAG Green (they can be automatically added to the register). The remaining 35% require further evidence or similar and will take the same time to re-process in order to achieve registration.
- 7.7 Following the introduction of individual electoral registration (IER) on 10 June 2014 (19 September 2014 in Scotland), any new applicant for a postal vote must be registered individually in order for their application to be determined and accepted.
- 7.8 All existing postal voters must be registered individually in order to retain their postal vote following the publication of the revised register by 1 December 2014 (by 2 March 2015 in Scotland). Nobody will be able to vote by post at any election held after this date unless they are registered individually.
- Applicants for an absent (postal) vote must have made successful new application for registration or had registration confirmed.
 - Entitlement to an absent vote will cease after first new canvass if no successful new application for registration or confirmation of registration
- 7.9 The Electoral Registration (Disclosure of Electoral Registers) Regulations 2013 is the relevant legislation. Under these Regulations:
- there will be no automatic removal of electors from the electoral register in the run-up to the 2015 elections; but
 - an absent voter must be registered under IER in order to keep their absent vote in 2015.
- 7.10 Therefore, electors who registered in 2012, but who have not registered or matched under IER this year, will be included in the register published on 1 December 2014, and therefore will be able to vote in person at their polling station on 7 May 2015; but if they are currently also postal voters, they will lose their postal vote from 1 December 2014. Under the rolling register arrangements, electors in this position will be able to submit a new IER registration, up to 20 April 2015; and if they also want a postal vote on 7 May 2015 they will have to make a fresh postal vote application by 21 April 2015.

8. MAYORAL PETITIONS

- 8.1 Under the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (England) Regulations 2000, the number of signatures required to make a Mayoral petition valid is 5% of the

number of local government electors shown in the Electoral Register on 17 February 2014. The threshold figure for determining the validity of any petition is 5,903.

9. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

9.1 The electoral registration process and elections support the promotion of the participation of Reading people in local democracy.

10. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

10.1 Following the initial communications plan in 2010 which adopted a "Your Vote Counts" campaign, Electoral Services continues to promote participation in the democratic process by:

- Production of posters in A4 and A3 size, in English, Polish and Urdu, circulated to all on the Promotion Team's circulation list (all RBC venues, libraries, leisure centres etc)
- A press release to coincide with the start of the door-to-door Canvass
- Targeted registration of university students
- Posters printed in Polish and Urdu delivered to local shops and community centres

10.2 As in previous years, in 2014 Reading will be proactive in contacting Reading University and the Students' Union. Initiatives include:

- Putting information about electoral registration on the big screen in the Students' Union building
- Including information about electoral registration in the Students Union newsletter
- Putting the information on the University student home page
- Including information about registration on the Students' Union web page
- Attendance at the Freshers' Fayre to promote personal registration by students

10.3 Reading schools held their annual elections in October/November 2013, and October/November 2014 with support from Electoral Services. The team continues to liaise regularly with the Youth Parliament regarding the electoral process.

10.4 The cost of the press activity was approximately £4,000 in 2013 and £5,000 in 2014.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The electoral registration process is prescribed by the Representation of the People Act 1983, in particular Sections 8-17. Section 10 governs the maintenance of registers and the annual canvass. The Electoral Registration Officer is required to carry out an annual canvass each autumn based on residence on a "relevant date" of 15 October; and all householders have a duty to complete and return the electoral registration form. In 2011, the canvass ran from 19 August to 25 November. In 2012, the canvass ran from 6 July until 10 October.

11.2 Section 10(A) - and Regulations 33 and 34 - provide for the carry forward and removal of names from the register. Where the Electoral Registration Officer is unable to confirm, during the annual canvass, that a registered elector was resident at the relevant date, because the canvass return was not returned or because he has obtained insufficient other

information to indicate residence, then the ERO will carry forward that elector's entry on the electoral register until the publication of the annual register following the next publication of the annual register. This means that where a canvass form was not returned during the 2013/14 canvass period any relevant electors will cease to be registered after the completion of the 2015 canvass but not before (ie after next May's elections)

- 11.3 Following the introduction of individual electoral registration (IER) on 10 June 2014, any new applicant for a postal vote must now be registered individually in order for their application to be determined and accepted. Nobody will be able to vote by post unless they have registered individually. If an elector has not registered individually by the publication of the new register on 1 December 2014, but has been carried forward under the default arrangements described above, they will lose their postal vote from that date, and to get it back they will have to re-apply both to be on the electoral register under IER, and for a postal vote.
- 11.4 Under the Electoral Registration (Disclosure of Electoral Registers) Regulations 2013:
- there will be no automatic removal of electors from the electoral register in the run-up to the 2015 elections; but
 - an absent voter must be registered under IER in order to keep their absent vote in 2015.
- 11.5 Therefore, electors who registered in 2012, but who have not registered or matched under IER this year, will be included in the register published on 1 December 2014, and will be able to vote in person at their polling station on 7 May 2015; but if they are currently also postal voters, they will lose their postal vote from 1 December 2014. Under the rolling register arrangements, electors in this position will be able to submit a new IER registration, up to 20 April 2015; and if they also want a postal vote on 7 May 2015 they will have to make a fresh postal vote application by 21 April 2015.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The 2013/14 budget for electoral registration is £294.6k. Of this, the door-to-door canvass cost in 2013 was £60k and in 2014 will be approximately £53k, as against budget provision of £50k.
- 12.2 Government funding of £110,000 has been received from the Cabinet Office for 2014/15 and further funding has been confirmed for 2015/16, for the additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Representation of the People Acts - Summary of Register of Electors 2007.