

News on Individual Electoral Registration

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NEWS UPDATE:

We have extended
the deadline for
the CO question-
naire on Local
Delivery of IER &
Increasing Regis-
tration Rates until
the 31 August.

Please email the
team if you re-
quire for more
information.

In this edition, we take a closer look at the recently published *IER Implementation Plan*, explain how the plans are being driven forward and summarise the key events in the transition to IER.

We also answer some of your questions on implementation and highlight how the work of the Expert Panel has helped to develop IER.

Recent progress

Since we published the first edition of *IER Insight* in June, the [Electoral Registration and Administration Bill](#) has passed through the House of Commons without amendment, following three days of detailed examination in the Committee stage. The Bill has now entered the House of Lords where it will undergo the same process of debate that was undertaken in the House of Commons. The first stage of Committee is scheduled for 23 October once Parliament returns after the summer.

On the Bill's introduction to Parliament the Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform, Mark Harper MP, committed to publish draft Secondary Legislation relating to the Bill as soon as possible. The first tranche of documents were published in June with more due to be released as we move into autumn. You can read these proposals on [the Cabinet Office website](#).

Implementation Panel

Building on the excellent collaborative work that resulted in the publication of the Implementation Plan, a panel has been established to ensure that people with direct experience of electoral operations remain central to decision making regarding the implementation of IER.

The Panel covers several functions which include: providing a clear steer on the implementation of IER; giving assurance that projects are working to time, appropriate cost and quality; maintaining a challenge function on the feasibility of successful delivery of IER and acting as a forum where strategic issues that impact on implementation can be resolved.

Representatives from the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA), Electoral Commission (EC), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Cabinet Office (CO) continue to work with us closely and are all members of the panel.



Dates for your diary

Throughout Autumn - Cabinet Office will be attending regional branch meetings where you can ask questions about IER that matter to you.

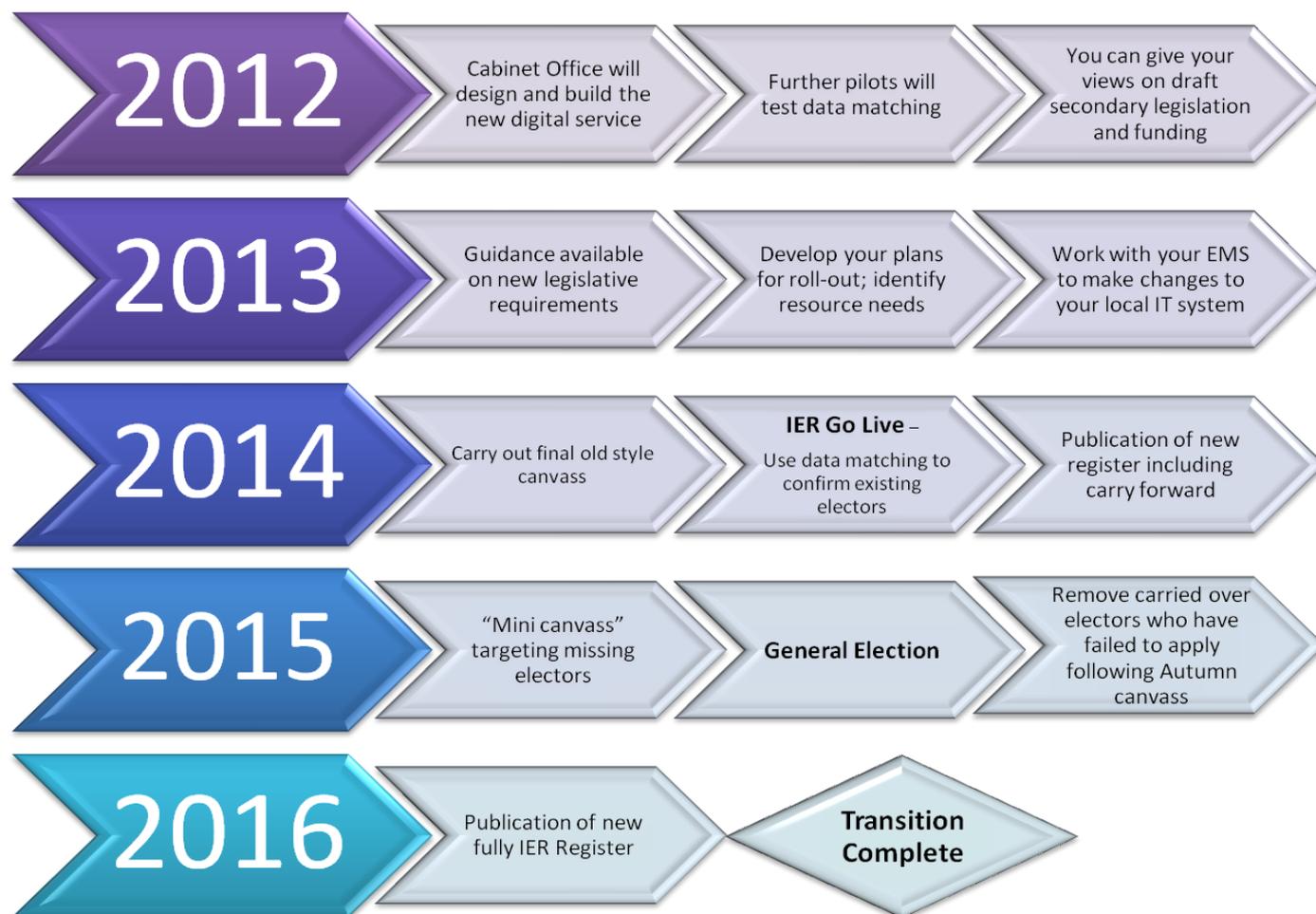
Further draft secondary legislation will be published - look out for forthcoming Announcements.

If you'd like to contact us, email the team below:
electoralregistration@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk



The Implementation Plan - what does this mean for you?

On 17 July the Cabinet Office published the [Implementation Plan for Individual Electoral Registration](#). This plan provides more information on how the transition to IER will be delivered, and focuses on the activities that need to happen at a local level. More detailed guidance will be published next year, however below is a quick guide to the main events in the transition to IER that you should be aware of.



Feedback will be critical to the successful delivery of IER so please send any comments or questions you may have to electoralregistration@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

Draft Secondary Legislation - developing IER

While the Electoral Registration and Administration Bill was being debated in Parliament, we published proposed draft secondary legislation, defining how IER works in practice and what will be required from you. This was released in two parts and can be found in a combined document on the Cabinet Office website [here](#). We would encourage you to read the document and feed back any comments you may have to our [Electoral Registration](#) mailbox.

This summer, we will be working be consulting stakeholders, including the AEA, EC, SOLACE, and other organisations with a particular interest in IER. A full list is provided in the introduction to the document. The AEA will also be holding a workshop in early September to discuss how the proposed draft secondary legislation may impact on local authorities and identify any issues that may arise from it. This workshop will be attended by representatives from across AEA and the collated feedback will be used to inform policy decisions about IER.

Over the forthcoming weeks, we aim to publish further drafts of other secondary legislation before Parliament returns for the autumn so please look out for further updates.

Q & A's – Feedback on the IER Implementation Plan

Earlier this month, we asked AEA members to identify their top three questions about IER. Below is a selection of some of the queries you raised with our response; more information will be continue to be provided to you via *IER Insight*, the AEA intranet and other news channels.

The IER Implementation Plan is very high level. How will I know what to do?

Full guidance will be published to tell you how the new system will work and what you are required to do; training will be provided to help you implement it. We will also provide you with regular bulletins during the implementation phase. If you have any questions you should send them to electionalregistration@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk and we will respond within ten working days. The Government is working closely with the AEA, SOLACE and EC to ensure that you are fully informed about how you will make the transition to IER. We have also taken into account how implementation fits into stakeholder activities and the electoral calendar.

Why is IER being implemented before the General Election in May 2015?

There is significant concern amongst the public about electoral fraud and all political parties have agreed that more should be done to restore trust in the system by introducing IER. Starting the transition in 2014 will mean that we will begin to see the benefits of the new system before the next General Election. Under IER every elector will have to register individually and have their application verified. The move to IER also gives us the opportunity to modernise our electoral registration system, making it more convenient for people to register to vote, by opening up online registration.

Why will electors who have failed to register under IER not be removed from the register until late 2015?

We have learned lessons from the Northern Ireland experience when they moved to a new system of electoral registration overnight. It has therefore been decided to phase in the transition to individual registration over two years to support the completeness of the register and give people plenty of opportunity to transition to the new system, while ensuring that new registrations from 2014 will be through individual registration.

How will data matching work?

It is intended that existing electors will be matched against DWP data in the summer of 2014, those successfully matched will be confirmed on the register and no further steps will be required. Data matching was initially tested in 2011 and further testing is being undertaken this autumn which should provide us with practical experience using real electors' data that we will share.

If there is a difference between local and national data which records will be deemed correct?

As part of the pilots we will be testing the validity of the national against local data to understand which may be relied upon where there is a conflict. This approach will be clarified in the guidance that will be issued next year.

How will funding for the transition to IER be allocated to local authorities?

The Government is committed to funding the full cost of the transition to IER over and above the current cost of electoral registration. The Minister for Political and Constitutional Reform, Mark Harper MP, will be writing to all local authority Chief Executives and Electoral Administrators to seek your views on how Electoral Registration Officers should be funded to pay for this transition. To ensure that IER funding remains distinct from the formula grant we propose to distribute funding throughout the year, rather than with the rest of the formula grant. This will be done through non-ring fenced grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 in England and Wales. Within Scotland where the situation is more complex the additional costs of implementing the new system will be paid directly to the fifteen EROs responsible for the Council areas.

We would appreciate your views on our funding proposals by the end of September and the Minister will be writing to you again in March 2013 to outline the amount of funding each local authority will receive and the precise mechanism for allocation.

Engaging with the Experts - who are the Expert Panel?

Over the last two years, you may have heard how the CO has developed its legislative and business design proposals by working closely with stakeholders, and in particular, with the Expert Panel. Their commitment and support has been invaluable in helping us to understand how the changes we make by introducing IER will directly impact upon electoral administrators, the elector and electoral landscape. With this in mind, we have shed some light on the people behind the Expert Panel and their thoughts on how their influence has helped shape IER.

The panel is made up of almost twenty senior elections staff representing a diverse cross-section of local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, (see right). In 2010, volunteers were asked to join an advisory panel that would utilise the expert knowledge of the group, acting as an aid to the work of the CO. The Panel now meets regularly and has helped to shape policy that has become the [Electoral Registration and Administration Bill](#); input into the design of the future system and challenge our assumptions about how the system will work in practice. The end result is a better designed system that best reflects your needs.

Below is some information about two members who have been involved with the Expert Panel from the beginning: **Andrew Colver** (Rushmoor Borough Council) and **Clive Joynes** (Isle of Wight Council).



Andrew Colver,
Head of Democratic Services at Rushmoor Borough Council

- 15 years in elections; other responsibilities in facilities; Committee services & building maintenance
- Electorate: 66, 000
- Electoral team: less than 2 full time staff but staff within department work flexibly within peak periods.
- Involved in 2011 data matching pilots for service electors and attainners.
- *"I feel the CO's approach to engagement with administrators has been really positive. The Expert Panel has had a valued role to play in the project and I believe administrators' views have been taken into account."*



Clive Joynes,
Elections & Local Land Charges Manager at Isle of Wight Council

- Elections and Local Land Charges Manager at Isle of Wight Council since 2005
- Holds the Electoral Administrator AEA diploma, and is chair of the Southern AEA branch.
- Electorate: 112,000 (fully emparished)
- Electoral team: 4 staff that cover both elections and land charges
- *"It is reassuring to know that [CO] is actively engaging with stakeholders at all levels to ensure legislation and electronic solutions match our aspirations to introduce a system that is robust, effective and not encumbered with unnecessary steps or layers of bureaucracy."*

Membership:

Eastern:
Laura Lock
(Huntingdon)

East Midlands:
Vacancy -
Branch contacted

Greater London:
Peter Stanyon
(Enfield)

Stephen O'Hare
(Greenwich)

Fran Biggs
(Southwark)

Neil Kennett
(Wandsworth)

North East/Yorkshire:
James Moran
(Rotherham)

North West:
Neil Middlehurst
(Sefton)

Scotland:
Brian Bryne
(Central Scotland)

Southern:
Clive Joynes
(Isle of Wight)

Paul Morris
(Poole)

Andrew Colver
(Rushmoor)

South East:
Jane Ringham
(Medway)

Rob Curtis
(Runnymede)

South West:
Vacancy -
Branch contacted

Wales
Phil Johnson
(Newport)

Glynn Morgan
(Pembrokeshire)

West Midlands:
Liz Read
(Coventry)

Darren Whitney
(Stratford-on-Avon)