

Scrutiny Committee – Review Topic Submission Form

Councillor Name and other Councillors supporting submission	Cllr Chris Vince Cllr Tony Durcan Cllr Tony Edwards
Review Topic	Turnout in local elections
Links to the Council's priorities	<i>Being the community leader</i>
What priority level is this item?	<i>high</i>
Terms of reference (to include the scope of the review)	<i>In the last local elections turnout was below 30%. This is considerably lower than in national elections. The scope for this is to find out why it is lower. Do residents feel disconnected from local politics or do they not understand the powers that local authorities have? Are there external reasons, the weather, national political pictures, which effect turnout in local elections?</i>
Purpose and objective of the review	<i>Improve opportunities for Harlow residents to participate in local democracy and decision making</i>
Methodology/approach (methods to be used for gathering evidence)	<i>Testimony from voters who do and don't vote in local elections, who only vote in national elections and those who don't vote at all. Statistics from the council, historic, about voter turnout to spot trends.</i>
Written evidence required	Report back to scrutiny committee.
Potential witnesses	<i>Returning officers Members of the public Counters Councillors and candidates from different political parties (if appropriate)</i>
Potential Stakeholder involvement (who are the stakeholders and how will their views be sought)	A consultation with members of the public would be useful finding out if residents vote in (a) local elections (b) national elections and understanding barriers and reasons that they don't. This should include a mix of genders, ethnic groups and social

	economic groups.
Site visits (where and when)	Visits to local community groups might be useful to increase engagement in this. To maximise participation it would be easier to go to them.
Publicity (methods to be used)	Publicity will be key. Advertising on social media etc. to encourage people to get involved.
Resources (people, expenditure)	Potentially paper copies of consultation would be needed to engage people who do not have access to the internet. Officer time.
Barriers/dangers/risks (any weaknesses or potential pitfalls in the review)	<i>Lack of participation</i>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A large percentage of population of Harlow from across the town and including different genders, ethnic minority groups and social economic backgrounds engaged in the consultation. - A clearer understanding of why people don't engage in local elections and an action plan to allow greater participation in the decision making process.