



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL



Candidates and Agents Briefing

Local Government Elections

6 May 2021



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COUNCIL

BRIEFING FOCUS POINTS

- Key Details & Key dates of the election timetable
- Public Health Principles in light of Coronavirus
- Qualifications & Disqualifications
- Nominations
- Campaigning and Agents
- Postal Votes, Absent Votes and Proxy Votes
- The Poll
- The Verification and Counting of Votes
- Candidate Spending
- Security matters - GMP
- Key Contacts

KEY DETAILS

What's Happening

- **Local Elections**
- **Greater Manchester Mayoral Elections**
- **Different voting systems used for each of the polls.**
- **Electors eligible to vote in in Trafford is 172,264.**

Who's Who

- The Returning Officer
- The Electoral Registration Officer
- The Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer is **Sara Todd.**

KEY DATES

EVENT	DATE
Publication of Notice of Election	Monday 29 March 2021
Nominations Period between 10am and 4pm	Commences: Tuesday 30 March 2021 Closes: Thursday 8 April 2021
Notification of appointment of election agents	4pm on Thursday 8 April 2021
Publication of statement of persons nominated	Friday 9 April 2021
Deadline for applications to register to vote	Monday 19 April 2021
Deadline for new postal vote applications/changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm on Tuesday 20 April 2021
Publication of notice of poll/polling station detail	Tuesday 27 April 2021

KEY DATES

EVENT	DATE
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021
Appointment of counting and polling agents	Wednesday 28 April 2021
Polling Day	6 May 2021
Deadline to apply to vote by proxy on ground of medical emergency or if unexpectedly called away because of employment or service	5pm 6 May 2021
Replacement for lost/spoilt postal votes	5pm 6 May 2021
Alterations to register to correct clerical error	9pm 6 May 2021
Return of Election Expenses	35 Days from result

Coronavirus Regulations Amendments

An exception to the restrictions on leaving home for the purposes of:

- Nomination of candidates
- Campaigning
- Observing an election (including voting, opening postal votes or counting votes)

And on the restrictions on gatherings for the purposes of:

- Nomination of candidates
 - No more than 2 people
- Campaigning
 - No more than 2 people, one of whom being the campaigner
 - Where the campaigner remains outside the other person's dwelling (this would cover "door-knocking")
- Observing an election (including voting, opening postal votes or counting votes)

STAYING SAFE – COVID CONSIDERATIONS

General public health principles that everyone should follow in all aspects of daily life, including participating in elections:

- Maintain social distancing
- Clean hands regularly
- Avoid touching your face
- Wear a face covering where necessary
- No-one should attend any electoral events if they are unwell, symptomatic with COVID-19, a confirmed case or a confirmed contact of someone who is self-isolating

NOMINATIONS: QUALIFICATIONS

- Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:
 - be at least 18 years old
 - either be a British citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen
- Also at least one of the following:
 - Registered local government elector for local authority area
 - Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
 - Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in local authority area
 - Lived in the local authority area during the last 12 months

NOMINATIONS: DISQUALIFICATIONS

A person cannot be a candidate if they:

- are **employed by the local authority** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Candidates may be 'employed by the local authority' if they work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services
- are subject of a **Bankruptcy Restrictions Order** (or interim restrictions order) in England or Wales
- have been sentenced to a term of **imprisonment** of three months or more (inc. suspended sentence) without option of a fine, during the 5 years before polling day
- are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a **corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
- hold a **politically restricted post**

NOMINATIONS PAPERS

The documents that must be submitted by all candidates are:

- the nomination form
- their home address form
- the consent to nomination

Party candidates will also need to submit:

- A certificate authorising the use of a party name/ registered description on the ballot paper
- A written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional)

Please download Nomination Papers from:

- <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/elections/Elections-2021.aspx> or
- from the Electoral Commission webpage.

NOMINATIONS PAPERS

- **Each nomination form needs to be signed** (subscribed) by two electors on the local government electoral register in the ward.
- The electors **must be of voting age** by polling day and be on the register that is in force on the last day for publication of notice of election.
- The two electors will sign and print their names as proposer and seconder.
- The **elector number of each subscriber** as it appears on the electoral register, including the distinctive numbers or letters of the polling district, must be entered on the nomination form.

NOMINATIONS – COLLECTING SIGNATURES

Coronavirus regulations,:

- process of collecting signatures for nominations can be deemed a reasonable excuse to travel; and
- you will be able to travel across local areas where necessary; and
- Legislation to reduce the number of signatures required on nomination papers at the 2021 is explained on the next slide
- Other rules about the requirements of nomination papers have not changed.

You must continue to follow public health guidance on COVID Safety measures and you must not leave home to collect signatures yourself if you have symptoms, if you have tested positive or are awaiting a test result, or are required to self-isolate for other reasons, such as being a close contact of an individual who has tested positive.

NOMINATIONS – SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

- Time limited change to Nominations Rules
- Intended to reduce the need for person to person contact in March ahead of the May elections.
- The number of signatures required will be reduced:
 - **‘Local’ council elections : 2 instead of 10**
 - **Combined Authority Mayor (CAM): 20 (There must be two subscribers from each local authority).**
- Signatures are still be required as it provides a democratic check that a candidate has a degree of local support

NOMINATIONS –SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

- All signatures on the nomination form must be wet ink signatures, and the original version must be submitted.
- Electronic signatures will not be acceptable.
- You may decide to start collecting signatures earlier than usual as a result of the coronavirus restrictions.:
 - subscribers for your nomination must be included on the electoral register as at 1 March 2021; AND
 - you will need to take their elector numbers from that register.
 - consent to nomination must not be signed or dated earlier than one calendar month before the deadline for the delivery of nomination papers.

COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING NOMINATION PAPERS

- Take Care – Mistakes made on a nominations form can have great consequences!
- Guidance documents – The Electoral Commission have published lots of guidance documents about how to complete nominations forms – Access via website
- Informal check of papers – We would urge you to contact the Elections Office to arrange an appointment so we can informally check your completed Nominations forms:
 - **Leave enough time to make changes if advised to do so**
 - **If all okay – can accept the nomination at that point**

COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING NOMINATION PAPERS

- The nomination form, home address form and consent to nomination must be delivered by hand to **Trafford Town Hall, Committee Room 1** between 10am and 4pm from **Tuesday 30 March 2021 to Thursday 8 April 2021**
- The Nomination forms cannot be submitted by post, fax, e-mail or other electronic means.
- To safely manage the number of people attending the elections office, you must contact the Elections Office by email elections@Trafford.gov.uk to make an appointment in advance.

COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING NOMINATION PAPERS

- When attending the elections office, you should be prepared to follow all public health measures in place.
- **You must not attend the elections office if you have symptoms of coronavirus, if you have been tested positive or are awaiting a test result, or are required to self- isolate for other reasons.**
- In the event that you are unable to deliver the nomination papers yourself, you should check the electoral Commission's Guidance for candidates and agents to determine who else is allowed to deliver your nomination papers.
 - You could consider changing your agent where necessary in this scenario to enable papers to be submitted safely.

ELECTION AGENTS AND OTHER AGENTS

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its financial management.
- **Notification of appointment must reach the Elections Office by 4pm on 8 April 2021**
 - **Absolute Deadline**
 - Form is included in Nomination Pack.
- **You will become your own agent by default if none is appointed.**

Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:

- **You must give notice in writing to the Elections Office of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by Wednesday 28 April 2021**
- The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session.

CANDIDATE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Candidates have a right to electoral register/absent voting lists once officially become a candidate:

- Make written request – forms are available from the office / are included in your nomination pack.

Data Protection: You must only use data for permitted purposes:

- to complete the nomination form
- to help you campaign
- to check that donations/loans are permissible



CAMPAIGNING

- Guidance on campaigning in the current public health context which candidates, agents and parties can refer to in planning their own activities has been produced by the UK Government and can be found on their website.
- In the course of your campaigning you may be asked questions by the public about how they can participate in the polls safely in light of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The following slides highlight some points are designed to help you to provide information to voters accordingly.



CAMPAIGNING: PARTICIPATION

Encouraging Participation:

- As a candidate you are uniquely placed to encourage people to register to vote.
- It is important that electors understand that polling stations will be safe places to vote and that there are a number of ways that they can vote at elections.
 - They can vote in person in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone they trust to vote on their behalf (known as a proxy).
 - If voters would prefer to vote by post, they should be encouraged to apply early. The deadline for applying for the election is 20th April 2021
- Individuals can apply to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It only takes a few minutes.

CAMPAIGNING: POLLING STATIONS

- We have put arrangements in place to ensure that polling stations are safe places to vote
- Most of the measures that will be in place will be familiar to us all from visiting other public places such as shops and banks, for example floor markings to ensure social distancing and the provision of hand sanitiser on entry and exit
- Voters will be encouraged to bring their own pen or pencil for use in polling stations, but pencils will also be made available for anyone who needs one
- Voters should be encouraged to check their poll card before polling day, to see if their polling station has changed since previous elections

CAMPAIGNING: ABSENT VOTING

Voting by POST OR PROXY

If you are encouraging people who don't have a postal (or proxy) vote to apply for one, make sure you explain that they will only qualify for one in time for the elections if they register in time.

Encourage voters to return their applications as soon as they can. You should make them aware of the **relevant deadlines and advise them to apply early:**

- The deadline for applying for a postal vote at the elections 5pm on 20 April 2021.
- The deadline for applying for a proxy vote at these elections is 27 April 2021, although in some circumstances voters may be able to appoint an emergency proxy after this date and up to 5pm on polling day itself.
- Observe the Code of Conduct in relation to absent voting,.

CAMPAIGNING: ABSENT VOTING

EMERGENCY PROXY: In certain circumstances, where a voter has an emergency that means they cannot vote in person, they can apply for an emergency proxy.

- The form for they need to complete depends on the reason for needing a proxy vote.
- A voter may be entitled to an emergency proxy vote if:
 - they have an illness or medical disability
 - they are unable to attend because of your work
 - they are self-isolating due to COVID

In all cases this must be something that the voter was not aware of before the normal proxy vote deadline.

Emergency applications can be made to the Elections Office up to 5pm on polling day.

CAMPAIGNING DOS AND DON'TS

- **Guidance on campaigning in the current public health context which candidates, agents and parties can refer to in planning their own activities has been produced by the UK Government and can be found on their website**
- Do use imprints on all your campaign material
- Do comply with all regulations and rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- Do make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).

CAMPAIGNER CODE OF CONDUCT

Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process.

Postal ballot packs:

- Never touch a postal ballot paper
- Never observe electors completing their postal vote
- Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot packs from voters.

Campaigning outside polling stations:

- You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including in public spaces outside polling places
- Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
- Tellers – must not obstruct access to and from the station

POLLING DAY KEY FACTS

- **Polling stations open from 7am to 10pm.**
- **Election Office open 6.30 am to 10.30 pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election**
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper.
- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the constituency or relevant electoral area or delivered to the elections office until 10pm.

VERIFICATION AND COUNTING OF VOTES

- The anticipated duration of the count is likely to be longer than usual because of the impact of measures to ensure the safety of staff and observers.

Adaptations to the verification and count:

- We will be **using the venue differently in** order to make the event as safe as possible
- **For safety reasons, they may limit the number of counting agents and guests** who are permitted to attend, but will continue to ensure that each candidate is allocated the same number
- **Access to different areas and parts of the process may be more tightly managed** than usual, but we will take steps to help ensure that those who are entitled to oversee certain processes will still be able to do so, albeit this will be managed differently than at previous elections given the social distancing guidelines
- There **may be fewer staff counting the votes** to ensure that the number of people attending can be safely accommodated. **Staff may be granted more breaks than usual, so that they can clean their hands regularly**

VERIFICATION AND COUNTING OF VOTES

- Some processes, such as the adjudication of doubtful ballot papers, may be managed differently to previous events for public health safety reasons.
- The communication of provisional results to candidates and agents may also be managed differently, for example, the Returning Officer may not be able to gather candidates and agents together in the traditional way, but may communicate the provisional result to you individually or, where possible, gather candidates in a sufficiently large private room.
- Similarly, candidates may not be able gather on the stage for the declaration of the results, and speeches may not be allowed, to ensure that social distancing can be maintained
- The use of face-coverings will be required for all those attending the verification and count venue (unless subject to an exemption), in line with government regulations.

VERIFICATION AND COUNT FACTS

- The count will be held in The Point, Lancashire Cricket Club, Talbot Road on Friday 7 May 2021
- Candidates, election agents, counting agents and one other person appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend.
- - there may be limits to counting agents:
- Number of Counting Agents will confirmed
- The times of commencement to be confirmed

CANDIDATE SPENDING AND RETURNS

- **The spending limit for the regulated period is £806, plus 7p per local government elector in the ward** registered to vote on the last day for publication of the notice of election in the ward which you are standing for.
- **Joint candidates have lower spending limits**, as they are sharing some of the costs. You should calculate your spending limit, and then reduce it by 25% - a quarter
- **Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election**
- **Returns made public by Returning Officer**
- **Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission**
- **Failure to submit a spending return is a criminal offence enforceable by police**
- **No spending will be reimbursed**

Security Matters - GMP

- Bronze Status for Trafford
- Usual GMP patrols will take place across the borough
- Updated information will be circulated to advise of any specific security measures, should any arise

Key Contact Details

Sara Todd	Chief Executive and Returning Officer	Sara.todd@Trafford.gov.uk
Jane Le Fevre	Corporate Director for Governance & Community Strategy	jane.lefevre@trafford.gov.uk
Sara Saleh	Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources	sara.saleh@trafford.gov.uk
John Addison Nicola Quinn	Governance Manager Senior Democratic Services (Elections) Officer	john.addison@Trafford.gov.uk 0161 912 4005 nicola.quinn@trafford.gov.uk

Key Contact Details

Electoral Commission Contacts:

If your question is about spending or donations, please contact us at:

Email: pef@electoralcommission.org.uk Tel: 0333 103 1928

For any other questions, please contact us at:

Email: infoengland@electoralcommission.org.uk Tel: 0333 103 1928



QUESTIONS

