

Council – 17th October

Notice of Motion:

Improved voting provision for visually impaired people

Democracy in the UK is a cornerstone of our society. A key part of this is the ability for individuals to hold a secret ballot in confidence. However, for those with visual impairments in the UK they must rely on assistance to vote, diminishing their ability to have a secret ballot. As a result it is estimated only 19% of visually impaired people were able to cast their ballot independently and in secret in last General election according to RNIB figure. With 350,000 people in the UK registered blind or partially sighted and 2 million people living with sight loss impacting their daily lives this is a matter impacting many residents lives and harming our democracy.

As such this Council resolves to:

- 1) Support the RNIB Blind Voters Count campaign
- 2) Request officers to continue to work with the RNIB along with local charities such as Southend Insight to research the local impact among our visually impaired residents
- 3) Request officers to continue to research solutions that allow blind people to vote independently both within our polling stations in Southend and by post
- 4) Request Cabinet to consider, as part of the budget setting process, a reasonable budget provision for the purchasing of equipment to better improve accessibility for blind people with voting and other council services, such as a braille printer.
- 5) Request officers to continue to reach out to other local and national disability charities to understand any difficulties other disabilities have when voting in order to improve accessibility for all.

Proposed by:
Cllr Daniel Nelson

Seconded by:

Cllr Dave Poulton

Cllr Stephen Ayles

Cllr Daniel Cowan

Cllr Robert McMullan

Cllr Paul Collins

Cllr Chris Webster