

Advice: The Pre-election Period Elections May 2023



The pre-election period (formerly called purdah) begins on 27 March 2023

What is the pre-election period?

The period immediately before elections when controversial decisions, statements and publicity should not be made by the Council. It is business as usual but with the application of good judgement in controversial matters. There are rules relating to the extent to which certain decisions or actions can be publicised during a pre-election period, or the way in which any publicity should take place. More information is available from the [Local Government Association](#).

The pre-election period and publicity

Local authorities in England and Wales are under a duty to have regard at all times to the Code of Recommended practice on local authority publicity (the Code) (issued under sections 2 and 4 of the Local Government Act 1986). The latest version of the Code that applies to local authorities in England was published on 31 March 2011.

It is important that we do not start any sensitive and non-statutory consultations, or if such a consultation concludes during the pre-election period, there is no publicity.

During the period between the notice of an election (27 March) and the election itself (4 May) local authorities should not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies them with any individual members or groups of members. Unless it is expressly authorised by statute, publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published by local authorities during this period although it is permissible for them to publish factual information identifying the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.

Advice should therefore be sought before launching events or major campaigns during the pre-election period.

Decision making in a pre-election period

Local councils or other public authorities outside of central government are not prevented from making decisions during the pre-election period. However, our usual approach is to not plan to make controversial decisions during the pre-election period. The exceptions are quasi-judicial decisions such as Development Control, and Licensing / Regulatory functions alongside two Delegated Decision sessions on the 28 March and the 4 April for non-contentious decisions.

Who to contact for further advice?

For advice on publicity and communications – [Kellie Evans](#), Head of Communications.

For advice on decision making - [Sharon Bridglalsingh](#), Director of Law & Governance or [Peter Brown](#), Head of Democratic Services.