



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 22nd November 2019

Subject: Canvass & Electoral Update Report

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1. Introduction

This report is to provide members with an update on the migration to the new Electoral Management System (EMS), an update on the Annual Canvass and the preparations for the forthcoming UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE).

2. Migration to new Electoral Management System (EMS)

As reported to the August Board meeting the scheduled migration began on 20th August with no major issues, the system was operational in time for the Annual Canvass to be run from it.

3. Annual Canvass

Under IER the Canvass has the following stages:

3.1 Issue of Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs):

The first stage of the Canvass was issue of HEFs to all properties in the Joint Board area. These forms invited those at each house to complete and return the form, to respond by telephone or internet and new electors to register online. This year canvass started 2nd September 2019 to allow full user testing on the new EMS. The numbers issued are shown in the table below, these show 2017 and 2018 data to allow for comparisons to be made.

Council	Household Enquiry Form 2017	Household Enquiry Form 2018	Household Enquiry Form 2019
East Renfrewshire	38,654	38,327	39,101
Inverclyde	38,793	37,964	38,939
Renfrewshire	85,561	84,163	87,300
Total	163,008	160,454	165,340

Any changes notified by post, telephone or internet resulted in the issue of an invitation to register (ITR) which could be completed on-line by using the Government Registration Portal or by personal application via post or telephone call.

3.2 Issue of Reminders:

Where no response had been made to the initial issue of HEFs, reminders were issued on 26th September 2019. The numbers issued were as follows:

Council	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019
	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder
East Renfrewshire	16,485	10,657	16,918	7,964	17,253	10,635
Inverclyde	20,141	13,960	18,561	10,587	20,176	14,530
Renfrewshire	43,556	30,912	41,635	23,927	46,456	32,194
Total	80,182	55,529	77,114	42,478	83,885	57,359

The issue of Second Reminders was carried out as a Door-to-Door Canvass although due to election being announced was not fully finished.

3.3 Door-to-Door Canvass:

IER mandates that at least one visit will be made to properties with electors who have made no response. This was carried out as part of the Second Reminder exercise.

For this Canvass, as the law requires, a door-to-door visit to properties where there had been no response had to be arranged. This year 61 temporary canvassers were recruited to personally visit the 57,359 properties for which a second reminder was to be issued. These temporary canvassers have been working round these since 18th October 2019. However, due to the UK Parliamentary General Election being called, canvass activity was ceased on 3rd November 2019. All canvassers were given instruction for the last few days of their canvass activity to encourage electors to go on-line to the Government Digital Service, where possible, and to complete their registration there as this is the quickest way to register. If this was not possible canvassers were able to assist in making applications for those wishing to do so.

The visiting of outstanding HEF's and ITR's will restart in the new year when our business as usual, effectively a mini canvass, will be carried out.

3.4 Local Secondary Checks:

Under the legislation in force, local data held by Councils and other bodies including Council Tax Billing records, lists of social tenancies and lists of private tenancies cannot be used for this Canvass. This continues to add to the complexity and cost of the Canvass.

3.5 Publication of Registers:

This would normally take place on 1st December each year, however, as a UKPGE has been called the register required to be published earlier this year and this happened at the beginning of November (approximately one month earlier than normal).

3.6 Costs:

This is the fifth “business as usual” Canvass since the introduction of IER. This type of canvass and the ongoing business as usual issue of HEF’s and ITR’s throughout the year is more expensive than the previous style of canvass. The UK Government has stated in the past that they will fund the extra expense of running this new version.

However, the funding for the present style of canvass ceases in 20/21. The UK Government has introduced changes to current legislation which will allow Electoral Registration Officers (ERO’s) to carry out various data matching exercises which should result in the costs of the canvass reducing. It is the intention of the UK Government that by using this legislation next year’s canvass will be carried out under these new regulations thereby allowing the removal of the current funding from the UK Government.

4. Elections

4.1 Elections:

The forthcoming UKPGE on 12th December has the following key dates:

26 th Nov 2019	Last Date for Registration (Midnight)
26 th Nov 2019	Last Date for New Postal Vote & New Postal Proxy (5pm)
26 th Nov 2019	Last Date to change existing Postal Vote & Proxy Vote (5pm)
4 th Dec 2019	Last Date for New Proxy Vote (non-Postal) (5pm)
12 th Dec 2019	Polling Day
12 th Dec 2019	Deadline for Emergency Proxy Vote Applications (5pm)
12 th Dec 2019	Last alteration due to Clerical Error (9pm)

There are no other planned elections at present, however, should one be called we will be prepared.

General Conclusions

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in the Joint Board for their hard work and effective management of the migration to the new EMS, the Annual Canvass and the continued preparations for the forthcoming election.

Recommendations

- i. The Board notes the contents of this report.

Kate A Crawford - 12th November 2019

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