



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 1 June 2018

Subject: Annual Canvass / Electoral Registration Update

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

This report is to provide members with an information on the forthcoming Annual Canvass for 2018, and an update on the tendering for both an Electoral Management System and all Print and Scan Services. Other issues affecting Electoral Registration are also highlighted.

2.0 Annual Canvass

2.1 Issue of Household Enquiry Forms (HEF's)

This process will commence in early July with the issue of Household Enquiry Forms (HEF) to all properties in the Valuation Joint Board area. These forms invite those at each property to complete and return the HEF either online, by telephone, text or post. Any changes notified will result in the issue of an Invitation to Register (ITR). An ITR can be completed online using the Governments Digital Service, by post or over the telephone. The table below illustrates previous HEF response rates:

Method of Return	2015 Total Issue 161,075	2016 Total issue 162,082	2017 Total issue 163,005
Internet	23,144	32,292	34,155
Phone	8,356	17,791	27,586
Text	2,907	n/a	n/a
Paper	74,782	72,856	54,234
Total returns	109,216 (68%)	122,939 (76%)	115,975(71%)

2.2 Issue of Reminders:

Where there is no response to the initial HEF a reminder HEF will be issued early August.

2.3 Door-to-Door Canvass:

If there is no response to the initial or first reminder HEF a canvasser will visit the property during September to November in an attempt to obtain a completed HEF at the door. We are employing more canvassers than ever before in an effort to door knock all those households who have not responded before the cut-off date for publication on the 1st December Register.

2.4 Local Secondary Checks:

Under the legislation in force, local data held by Councils and other bodies including Council Tax Billing records and lists of social/private tenancies cannot be used for this canvass. This continues to add to the complexity and cost of the canvass, however there are ongoing discussions with government around making changes to the canvass procedures. These changes are looking to make the process more efficient both in terms of cost and engagement with electors. I will report to the Board on any progress made on bringing these changes into force at the earliest opportunity.

2.5 Publication of Registers:

This takes place on 1st December 2018. The registers for the last 3 years have shown the following electorate:

Council Area	1 December 2015		1 December 2016		1 December 2017	
	Adults	Attainers	Adults	Attainers	Adults	Attainers
East Renfrewshire	68,647	457	70,112	437	69,543	2,285
Renfrewshire	125,340	609	129,445	461	129,636	3,883
Inverclyde	57,585	268	59,158	247	58,356	1,661
Total	251,572	1,334	258,715	1,145	257,535	7,829

2.6 Costs:

This will be the fourth “business as usual” canvass since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). This type of canvass and, ongoing business as usual issue of HEF’s and ITR’s throughout the year, is more expensive than the previous style of canvass. I think it is prudent to continue to budget for the existing cost of the canvass and ensure we receive the “top up” funding from the UK Government.

2.7 Boundary Review:

The Boundary Commission is considering responses to the consultation on its revised proposals for the 2018 Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies and developing its final recommendations. It is on course to submit its report to the Secretary of State for Scotland in September 2018.

2.8 Polling District Review:

The Returning Officer's (RO's) are responsible for the next compulsory review of polling districts and places which must be started and completed between 1 October 18 and 31 Jan 19. The ERO will have additional workload resulting from the review. Provided the RO's complete the review in time for publication of the revised register means that any changes can be reflected in it, and no subsequent alteration to the structure of an already published register will need to be made, thus avoiding the potential need to publish a further revised register. The RO's have been asked for receipt of any changes by early November where possible however, they have confirmed that this will all depend on the consultation process and Committee dates.

3.0 **Procurement**

Invitations to tender on behalf of the Board by Renfrewshire Council Procurement Team for an Electoral Management System (EMS) took place in December 2017 however on reviewing the submissions it was clear some matters raised needed further clarification. The original tender was withdrawn, and a new tender document has been prepared. This tender will be advertised shortly for interested parties to submit their bids. We are also in the process of going out to tender for the provision of all Print and Scan Services. A verbal update will be provided at the 1 June meeting.

4.0 **The Next Year**

There is a National Democracy Week (NDW) happening in early July. Along with my ERO colleagues throughout Scotland we have engaged STV to run some TV advertising to promote democratic engagement from all people in society and we hope the TV adverts will help ensure this message reaches a wide audience.

There are no scheduled elections for next year at present. However, we need to be prepared should a snap election or by election be called at short notice.

General Conclusions

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their continuing hard work and diligence in dealing efficiently with the management of the Annual Canvass and associated tasks.

Recommendations

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

Kate A Crawford - 1 June 2018

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