



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to : Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on : 18th November 2016

Subject : Electoral Registration Update Report

Author : Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

This report is to provide members with an update on the ongoing Electoral Registration Annual Canvass and other electoral issues facing the Board.

2.0 Annual Canvass

Under IER the Canvass has the following stages:

2.1 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, text or internet, or to register online. The number issued was:

Council	Household Enquiry Form
East Renfrewshire	38,352
Inverclyde	38,807
Renfrewshire	84,923
Total	162,082

Any changes notified by post, telephone text or internet resulted in an invitation to register which could be on-line use the Government Registration Portal or by personal application.

2.2 Issue of Reminders:

Where no response had been made to the initial issue of HEFs, reminders were issued on 2 September 2016. The number issued was:

Council	Household Enquiry Form	
	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder
East Renfrewshire	16,141	10,774
Inverclyde	18,519	13,668
Renfrewshire	41,216	30,407
Total	75,876	54,949

The issue of Second Reminders was incorporated with the Door-to-Door Canvass.

2.3 Door-to-Door Canvass:

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

For this Canvass, we had to arrange a door-to-door visit for properties where we had no response. Temporary Canvassers have been working round these since 7th October 2016.

This is the information we supplied to the EC when providing our canvass update:

The availability of time, funding and canvassers forced us to look closely at how to deal with the 2nd reminder stage for this year's canvass. We decided to split the 52,267 non returned HEF's into 2 categories:-

Firstly households with recent occupier information (18,490) and

Secondly households where we were less confident with the information held as it was either old or there was no occupier information (33,777).

We then focused on the 33,777 households with no/old information and sent a canvasser to door knock each household. The 18,490 with recent occupier information were treated as lower priority and were posted as we believed that this was a more efficient way of dealing with them. We intend to monitor returns from those posted in the New Year and follow-up if necessary.

2.4 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.

2.5 Publication of Registers:

This takes place on 1st December 2016.

2.6 Boundary Review:

The review of Council Boundaries will come into force in time for the elections on 4th May 2017.

Ideally, the Registers to be published on 1st December 2016 would reflect the changes to Ward Boundaries and Polling Districts. However, I do not intend to publish Registers with revised boundaries on 1st December 2016 unless I am convinced that the data used are as accurate as possible. I also need sufficient time to consider, apply and audit the changes. Registers as published must be as accurate as possible and free from any processing error.

As things stand, delays resulting from challenges to the proposed changes have resulted in a very compressed timescale for implementation of the changes. Monday 21st November is my last date for making changes in order that the Registers can be published on 1st December. The relevant map data and Polling Schemes are not yet finalised and it will not now be possible to reflect all of the changes for 1st December. Instead, the changes will be reflected in a fresh publication of the Registers on 1st February 2017.

2.7 Costs:

This is the second “business as usual” Canvass since the introduction of IER. I have, at earlier meetings of the Board, indicated the financial challenge we face this year as the result of having the same expensive process as in 2015 alongside a reduction in financial support from the UK Government.

There is now a possibility that additional funding may be made available but nothing is confirmed as yet.

3. The Next Year:

3.1 Elections:

There is one scheduled election - the Local Government Elections to be held on 4th May 2017.

Work is already under way in preparation for the Scottish Parliamentary Election and further meetings are being scheduled with the staff representing the three Returning Officers in the Joint Board area.

3.2 Key Dates:

- 17 April 2017 Last Date for Registration (Midnight)
- 18 April 2017 Last Date for New Postal Vote (5pm)
- 18 April 2017 Last Date to change or cancel existing Postal Vote & Proxy Vote (5pm)
- 25 April 2017 Last Date for New Proxy Vote (5pm)
- 4 May 2017 Polling Day
- 4 May 2017 Deadline for Emergency Proxy Vote Applications (5pm)
- 4 May 2017 Last alteration due to Clerical Error (9pm)

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.

Recommendations

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

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11th November 2016

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