



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 16th August 2019

Subject: Electoral Registration Update Report

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

This report is to provide members with an update on electoral issues facing the Board.

2.0 This year

2.1 European Parliamentary Election

The European Election was held successfully on 23rd May with no major issues.

2.2 Migration to new Electoral Management System (EMS)

2.2.1 The migration process was halted to concentrate on delivering the May election.

2.2.2 The next best date to migrate to the new system after the May elections is for the migration to coincide with the 2019 Canvass, which starts at the beginning of September and culminates in the production of the 1st December Register.

2.2.3 During June & July extensive User Acceptance Testing (UAT) has been carried out. The fact that the existing Electoral Management System (EMS) is a bespoke one, additional testing has been facilitated by the contractor supplying the new EMS, to ensure a smooth migration between the two systems.

2.2.4 The UAT tests have been successful and migration to the new system is scheduled for 20th August 2019.

2.2.5 Risks involved in this project are the fact that the canvass will be carried out on the new system with changes to addresses in some instances to ensure we are in line with the addressing protocol of the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LPG held by each of the 3 councils which may cause some issues this year, however, it is fully expected for any issues to be minimal and resolved going forward.

2.2.6 The political climate is uncertain and there could be an electoral event called at short notice. Given the fact that the canvass this year is running later than in previous years' (to allow for full UAT) there is a possibility that such an unforeseen event could occur during the September – December period. If this was to happen, we would follow the advice from the Electoral Commission on conducting a canvass during such circumstances.

2.2.7 The contractor has already tested the new system by running a “mock” election and comparing results from this to our existing system. The contractor is assured that there are no issues of concern. Given that this contractor is also the supplier of electoral systems to the three Returning Officers for the councils of the Board, this is further evidence of the system delivering as it should.

2.2.8 If an electoral event is called the contractor has undertaken to come on site and provide assistance and training as necessary to support such a scenario.

2.4 Referendums (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government has introduced a Referendum Bill which sets the framework for any Referendums held in Scotland. The Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) has been asked to respond to the call for evidence by 9th August and has been asked to give evidence to the Committee of the Scottish Government on the 18th of September.

2.5 Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill

A Bill to extend the franchise to include all persons legally resident in Scotland and prisoners who are detained for less than 12months has also been introduced by the Scottish Government. The SAA has been asked to respond by the 6th of September and to give evidence at this committee on the 3rd of October .

3.0 The Next Year - 2020

3.1 Introduction of new style Canvass

This new style canvass which is being developed by the Cabinet Office in consultation with various stakeholders is expected to start for next year's canvass around the summer of 2020, assuming the legislation to allow this to happen is in place. If this does go ahead this new style canvass is expected to deliver cost reductions going forward due to changes allowing local data matching.

3.2 Elections

There are no scheduled elections for 2020.

General Conclusions

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their continuing hard work and diligence in dealing efficiently with all aspects of registration and in particular the European Elections on 23rd May 2019 and the migration to the new EMS.

Recommendations

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

Kate A Crawford
Assessor & ERO
5th August 2019

For further information please contact Kate Crawford at 0141-618-5903
or via e-mail at kate.crawford@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk