



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to : Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on : 20th November 2015

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	Invitation to Register	Household Enquiry Form
East Renfrewshire	5,387	38,072
Inverclyde	4,511	38,748
Renfrewshire	9,949	84,256
Total	19,847	161,076

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 10 September 2015. The number issued was:

Council	Invitation to Register		Household Enquiry Form	
	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder
East Renfrewshire	3,346	1,453	17,895	12,155
Inverclyde	2,918	1,402	20,373	15,339
Renfrewshire	6,297	2,867	45,045	33,998
Total	12,561	5,722	83,313	61,492

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 67,205 properties where we had no response. Temporary Canvassers have been working round these since 8th October 2015.

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 has added to the complexity and cost of the Canvass.

2.5 Unconfirmed Electors:

The Transition Phase of IER also ceases on 1st December 2015 and, as a result, "Unconfirmed" electors will be removed the Register at publication.

Letters will be issued to these unconfirmed electors and they can re-register at any time thereafter subject to last date for applications for any Poll.

The following tables detail the number who must be removed from the Register at publication together with the number of unconfirmed electors at November 2014 and February 2015. From these tables it can be seen that the number at risk of removal has declined significantly in the last year as a result of work associated with Annual Canvasses and routine registration activities.

Number to be removed from Registers:

Council Area	Unconfirmed Electors
East Renfrewshire	1,434
Inverclyde	1,449
Renfrewshire	2,759
Total	5,642

Council Area	Unconfirmed Electors 01-Nov-14	Unconfirmed Electors 27-Feb-15
East Renfrewshire	5,654	3,166
Inverclyde	5,241	3,144
Renfrewshire	10,385	6,024
Total	21,280	12,334

2.6 Publication of Registers:

This takes place on 1st December 2015.

2.7 Costs:

This, the first “business as usual” Canvass since the introduction of IER allows a comparison to be made in terms of the costs involved in carrying out the work.

The last Canvass carried out under the last legislation concluded in December 2012. The major costs involved are printing, postage, recovery, scanning and additional canvassers. In 2012, these costs amounted to £130,000 in round terms. For the Canvass now concluding, we have incurred costs of £270,000 in round terms. Some of the additional cost has been met by funding by UK Government but that, along with the funding for temporary staff, has effectively ceased.

There is the potential for a funding shortfall in 2016. If the current rules for Canvass are unchanged, we can expect to incur the same costs without the benefit of additional funding. The UK Government intends to legislate to simplify the process but the conjunction of devolution of powers to Holyrood and the impact of the 2016 election on the legislative timetable leaves a possibility that the current rules will continue to apply in Scotland. Representations have been made to both Governments.

3. The Next Year:

3.1 Elections:

There is one scheduled election - the Scottish Parliamentary Election to be held on 5th May 2016. By-Elections can, of course, happen at any time.

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:

18 April 2016	Last Date for Registration (Midnight)
19 April 2016	Last Date for New Postal Vote & New Postal Proxy (5pm)
19 April 2016	Last Date to change existing Postal Vote & Proxy Vote (5pm)
26 April 2016	Last Date for New Proxy Vote (non-Postal) (5pm)
5 May 2016	Polling Day
5 May 2016	Deadline for Emergency Proxy Vote Applications (5pm)
5 May 2016	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.

Alasdair MacTaggart

Assessor & ERO

13th November 2015

For further information please contact Alasdair MacTaggart at 0141-618-5900
or via e-mail at alsadair.mactaggart@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk