

VJB35. ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE

The Board considered a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer on electoral registration activity in 2014 together with challenges for 2015 and beyond.

The report set out the electoral registration activity in regard to the European Parliamentary election on 22 May 2014 and the Scottish Independence Referendum on 18 September 2014. Public interest in the referendum led to unprecedented levels of electoral registration activity and demand. This was immediately followed on 19 September 2014 with the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in Scotland. This has resulted in significantly increased electoral registration activity and will impact on staff workload and budget. In addition, to comply with the requirements of IER preparations are underway for the UK Parliamentary election on 7 May 2015. In addition the annual canvass will commence on 15 July 2015 with a new electoral register to be published on 1 December 2015.

The Board sought clarification on the impact of the referendum on staff workload and on the service. The Assessor and ERO stated that the workload was unprecedented and that the commitment of all staff in working long hours had been to the service meeting huge public demand. At one point 1000 calls were received in a single day and 700 emails were regularly received daily. The Board asked that's it thanks and appreciation were expressed to all staff involved.

It was anticipated that postal budget for 2014/15 would be overspent as a direct consequence of IER. The Board sought confirmation that the budget would be balanced at year end. In response the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer indicated that overall the revenue budget would be underspent but within that the postal budget would be significantly overspent.

Decision

The Board noted the report.