

## **AGENDA ITEM 4**

### **VALUATION JOINT BOARD FOR CENTRAL SCOTLAND**

**Subject: Electoral Registration Report**  
**Meeting: Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board**  
**Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2010**  
**Author: Russell Taylor, Depute Electoral Registration Officer**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report deals provides an update on the current work of the Electoral Registration Officer.

#### **2.0 LEGISLATION**

The introduction of the voluntary collection of personal identifiers for electoral registration has been postponed by the Ministry of Justice. It was due to be introduced for the 2010 annual canvass. We await more information on how and when it will be implemented. The requirement to produce electoral registers in a BS7666 Data Standard has been implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

Working with Forth Valley GIS we have imported the Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG) number from each council and will now use this in our electoral registration system to identify differences in our address with the CAG address.

We plan, over a period of time, to alter the register address to match the CAG address if we confirm our address is wrong.

#### **3.0 POSTAL VOTES**

Currently 19,374 electors have chosen to vote by post (from a total electorate as at 1<sup>st</sup> February of 224,532). Of the 19,374 a total of 108 have a valid waiver which does not require them to provide a signature. The next UK Parliamentary election will be the first parliamentary election at which all postal vote personal identifiers will be checked by Returning Officers. Electors have until 5pm eleven working days before polling day to apply for a postal vote for an election. Therefore, it is very important that applications are made by the elector promptly and the transmission to us by hand, post, fax or scanned e-mail attachment is not delayed.

## **4.0 PROXY & POSTAL PROXY VOTERS**

Currently 122 electors have appointed a proxy (only three have waivers) plus fourteen have appointed a proxy who votes by post (one waiver).

## **5.0 REGISTRATION**

The 1<sup>st</sup> February Register of Electors totals 219,398 eligible UK Parliamentary Electors. This is less than the total shown in paragraph 3 as just over 5,000 are not eligible to vote in UK elections.

The last date for registering to vote in time for an election is minus eleven working days. For example, if the election is 6<sup>th</sup> May the last date on which anyone can register or alter their registration will be 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Throughout the year registration forms are issued by each Council's Finance Service along with council tax information whenever a change in liability occurs. Where no returned form is received, registration staff will check the monthly lists of changes received from Falkirk and Stirling Councils and issue new forms with a covering letter. For Clackmannanshire a list of changes is not available, so registration staff will identify changes in the full Council Tax file from Clackmannanshire Council before issuing new forms.

All new houses are issued with a registration form along with the Notice of Council Tax banding when the Assessor adds the property to the Council Tax List.

Some landlords and their agents have now agreed to notify us directly of changes in tenants. This allows registration staff to delete existing electors more promptly and issue forms to new occupiers prior to receiving the monthly council tax changes.

## **6.0 PUBLICITY**

With the election looming but as yet not announced we have issued various press releases to local newspapers and Central FM to help publicise the need to register promptly and to apply to vote by post before the deadline.

We have initiated meetings with Council communication staff and Returning Officer staff in order that we share information on the messages which need to be publicised and to use communication staff skills to identify appropriate media.

## **7.0 ELECTIONS**

We have in place the necessary arrangements to deal with the election whenever it is announced.

We have again initiated meetings with Council election staff in order that we identify the necessary tasks and resources to provide the poll cards, registers and absent vote lists when required.

The UK Parliamentary election is the only major election without a fixed timetable and can be called at a minimum of seventeen working days. This makes it extremely difficult to ensure that adequate time is devoted to each and every requirement of the legislation. We have arranged with external printers appointed by each Council that poll card data will be provided by the ERO each month from now. This is to ensure that they can start printing immediately the election is announced as the “cut-off” for registration and postal vote applications is eleven working days before polling day.

Printers have requested that postal vote data is provided as soon as possible after 5.00 p.m. on the last date for registration and applying to vote by post. As the timetable is so tight arrangements have been made for staff to work overtime to ensure that all applications received in time are checked and updated. New registers and absent vote lists will then be extracted and checked before the data is sent to printers to print and post ballot papers. More detailed checking may have to be delayed until after printing but before posting.

Registers and absent vote lists will be made available to candidates, if requested, as soon as possible after printers and Returning Officers staff receive their copies.

Staff are also involved in meetings to plan for and provide data to Returning Officers for the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park election in June and for community council elections

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Joint Board is asked to note the report.

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Date : 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2010