

## **AGENDA ITEM 8**

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

**Subject: INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**  
**Meeting: CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD**  
**Date: 7 September, 2012**  
**Author: REPORT BY ASSESSOR AND ERO**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report is to advise the Valuation Joint Board of the forthcoming legislative changes related to the introduction of the new system of Individual Electoral Registration (IER)
- 1.2 The report also details the known financial implications of the new regime

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The current system of electoral registration remains in place until after the European elections in June 2014 when the transition to individual electoral registration will begin.
- 2.2 From 2011 until June 2014 pilot investigations, preparatory work, testing and discussion of business processes have and will continue to be carried out by the Cabinet Office to allow transition to begin in July to September 2014 (a firm timetable will be announced in early 2013).
- 2.3 Plans at the moment are that the normal canvass of July to November 2013 will be replaced by a shorter but more intensive canvass in December 2013 to March 2014. There is not intended to be a canvass in late 2014 but there is a recommendation that a "mini canvass" is carried out in early 2015 before the UK Parliamentary General Election.
- 2.4 Evidence from the pilots in 2011 suggest that about two thirds of registered electors could be confirmed by matching to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) database, but this is to be further tested and refined in 2012.

#### **3. PROCESS**

- 3.1 Financial and process assumptions are made on the basis that checking against DWP is workable and produces matching of around 60% to 70%.

### 3.2 The process involved will be:

- Following a final traditional household canvass, from December 2013 till March 2014, the registration data for each individual will be matched against the DWP database
- The DWP match will provide the ERO with a confidence score that the individual is genuine and on the DWP database.
- The ERO will write to sufficiently matched electors to confirm registration or write to unmatched electors to invite an individual application. If the individual response provides more information to complete the match, the ERO will confirm registration.
- Unconfirmed or invitations not responded to will be followed up by door to door enquiries, further correspondence and phone calls.
- By December 2015 anyone not individually matched or individually registered from an application will be removed from the register.

## 4. FINANCE

- 4.1 The UK Government has promised to fund the transitional phase for Great Britain to a total of £155.9M less £47.6 for one fewer full canvass in the introduction year = £108.3M.

This breaks down to:		Additional costs	
		GB Million £	Central Scotland estimate
Year one data collection (by EROs)		£85.50	£380,000
Data Matching (by DWP) -		£17.00	
IT provision (Electoral Management Systems)		£5.20	
Verification (EROs)		£38.10	£169,000
Publicity (Government/Electoral Commission)		£1.40	
Staff & Admin (Government)		£8.10	
Research (Govt/Electoral Commission)		£0.60	
Rolling Registration	neutral	£0.00	£0
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>£155.9M</b>	<b>£549,000</b>
Household Canvass	minus	-£47.60	-£211,000
<b>Funded amount</b>		<b>£108.30M</b>	<b>£338,000</b>

- 4.2 The total transitional cost (to the Government) of IER therefore allowing for year one data collection and not carrying out one normal canvass = £108.3M (£2.27 per potential elector)
- 4.3 Currently a “normal canvass” in Scotland costs about £1 per potential elector. In Central Scotland that equates to very close (about £211,000) to the national average which is assumed by the Cabinet Office of £47.6m (£1.04 per potential elector). We can expect the other costs to the ERO to be in line with Cabinet Office predictions (£85.5m + £38.3m = £2.49 per elector) and would be around £549,000 in Central Scotland and therefore in theory fully covered by the Government. However a closer look at the assumptions does raise some concerns.
- 4.4 The main assumption is that there is no need for a traditional canvass in late 2014 and the Government funding is reduced by that amount (equivalent to £211,000 in Central Scotland) on the clear assumption that we continue to budget for that figure. There is a suggestion, however, in the implementation plan that a later targeted household/individual canvass would take place in early 2015. This suggestion is uncoded. Although this would be targeted to non responding households, as it deals with individuals it is likely to involve virtually every household just like a traditional canvass. This could (depending on verification levels) amount to between £100,000 and £200,000 for Central Scotland.
- 4.5 In my view some provision for this canvass in early 2015 is essential. In accordance with the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, the next UK Parliamentary General election is due to take place in May 2015. If there is no canvass this election will take place over a year after the previous canvass and the completeness and accuracy of the election register will be heavily dependent on the success of the Individual Electoral Registration project and public engagement with the process.
- 4.6 Another issue is that IER “years” do not strictly match financial years, so there may be a need to carry out a process but not receive re-imbursement until the later financial year. Discussions are ongoing with Cabinet Office about how to finance EROs and the method could well be different between England, Wales, and Scotland. A final decision of the exact method may not be made until early 2013.
- 4.7 Pilots are being carried out this year to identify whether the suggested 66% match rate is likely, and also whether EROs security levels in terms of IT are up to Government standards. If Central Scotland is required to move from the current commercially provided security and email systems to a government one the likely cost is £30,000.

## **5. RESERVES**

5.1.1 The total funding required to be held in reserve for Individual Electoral Registration transition.

- Additional canvass £150,000
- Email security improvement £30,000
- New back office software £20,000

Total £200,000

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations arising from this report are that the Valuation Joint Board:-

- (i) Notes the proposed move to Individual Electoral Registration.
- (ii) Notes the financial implications.

**Assessor/Electoral Registration Officer**

**Date: 28 August, 2012**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. IER Insight newsletter (August 2012)

2. IER Implementation Plan (July 2012)

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Implementation-Plan\\_0.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Implementation-Plan_0.pdf)

3. IER Impact Assessment (June 2011) Option 2

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm81/8109/8109.pdf>