

## **Agenda Item 8**

### **Electoral Registration Update**



## **Agenda Item 8**

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

**Subject: Electoral Registration Update**  
**Meeting: Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board**  
**Date: 24th September 2021**  
**Author: Pete Wildman, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report is to update the Board on Electoral Registration work that has been carried out since February 2021.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on ongoing and future work.

#### **2.0 SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION**

- 2.1 The Scottish Parliament Election which was held on 6 May 2021 was a significant event for the team. Whilst there had been local authority by-elections during the pandemic, this was the first full scale election to be held with Covid measures in place. There was also a by-election on the same day for Ward 2 in Stirling Council.
- 2.2 We worked closely via the SAA with other EROs, the Scottish Government, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and the Electoral Commission on the delivery of the election. Extra financial resource was provided by the Scottish Government that allowed us to issue a Household Notification Letter (HNL) to all households setting out who was registered and who had a postal vote. The letter also advised people how to register to vote, how to apply for a postal vote and the deadlines for doing so. There was a national television advertising campaign organised by the SAA that focussed on the deadline for applying for a postal vote. The additional funding also allowed us to recruit temporary employees to process the anticipated growth in postal vote applications.
- 2.3 The HNL proved highly effective in alerting people to the election and encouraging early applications to register to vote and for a postal vote. The induction of the temporary employees went smoothly and we received very positive feedback about the support they had received from their line manager and supervisors.



- 2.4 The following tables sets out the change in the eligible electorate ahead of the election.

Council	Electorate as at 1 December 2020	Postal Voters as at 1 December 2020	% of electorate with a postal vote
Clackmannanshire	38,830	5,372	13.83%
Falkirk	121,560	15,753	12.96%
Stirling	67,921	10,929	16.09%

Council	Electorate as at 28 April 2021	Postal Voters as at 28 April 2021	% of electorate with a postal vote
Clackmannanshire	40,397	8,607	21.31%
Falkirk	125,833	24,816	19.72%
Stirling	71,735	17,601	24.54%

- 2.5 Both the Parliamentary election and the Stirling Council by-election went smoothly with no major issues encountered. In the run up to polling day and on polling day itself we increased the number of employees working in Hillside House but maintained homeworking for the remainder of team. This proved effective and resilient.

### 3.0 ANNUAL CANVASS 2021

- 3.1 This is the second canvass under the new legislation.
- 3.2 Before the canvass commenced we had to match our register to the Department of Work and Pensions database, we also opted to match our register to our local Council Tax and Schools databases.
- 3.3 Where all electors in a property matched against another database, the property was put into "Route 1". Where one or more electors did not match the property was put into "Route 2". For larger establishments such as Care Homes and University Accommodation these were put into "Route 3". The tables below shows the split across Central Scotland. The first table shows the split for the 2020 canvass, the second table shows the split for the 2021 canvass.



Table 1 – 2020 Canvass

Route	Number of Properties	%
1	111,510	77%
2	30,845	21%
3	2,346	2%
Total	144,701	

Table 2 – 2021 Canvass

Route	Number of Properties	%
1	108,934	75%
2	34,141	23%
3	2,265	2%
Total	145,340	

- 3.4 For properties in “Route 1” where we held an email address for one or more electors we issued an email asking them to confirm that the details we hold are correct and to notify us of any changes. Where we didn’t hold an email address for any of the electors or we didn’t get a response to our email we have issued a paper communication advising who is registered at the property and asking people to only respond if there has been a change. We will not be doing any follow up activity for properties in Route 1. The response rate to the emails was 28.76% this year compared to 28% last year
- 3.5 For those properties in Route 2 we have issued a letter asking them to go online and confirm if the details we hold are correct and to notify us of any changes. As at the 24 August 2021 we had received responses from 33% of the properties to the initial communication. This is in line with the response rate at the same point in the canvass last year. If we don’t get a response to this communication we will issue a full canvass form, if that fails to get a response we will try and contact by phone any elector in the property who has matched against other records.
- 3.6 Last year due to the pandemic it was not possible to carry out door to door canvassing for any non-responding Route 2 properties. This year we have worked closely with the Staff Consultation Forum and our Health & Safety advisors and have developed protocols to allow the door to door canvassing to take place.



- 3.7 For those properties in Route 3 we will make direct contact with the organisation responsible for the property and obtain the information we require directly rather than via a property communication.

#### **4.0 OTHER WORK**

- 4.1 We will work with both the University of Stirling and Forth Valley College to promote voter registration. We will also work with the three Councils to promote registration within schools.
- 4.2 There is a by-election in Ward 7 of Falkirk Council on 14 October 2021 and we are working closely with the Returning Officer and his team in the run up to the election.
- 4.3 We will continue to operate a blended model of working, with the majority of employees working from home. There are a small number of employees in the office on a daily basis to carry out those tasks not readily done at home e.g. opening of mail, file scanning etc. There is a rota system in place for working in the office.

#### **5.0 FUTURE WORK**

- 5.1 The SAA is working with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to review the processes around inviting eligible prisoners to register to vote. Locally we will also seek to engage with groups representing foreign nationals to promote awareness of voter registration and encourage registration.
- 5.2 Work has already commenced to plan and prepare for the Local Authority elections in May 2022. Consideration is being given to the issue of a Household Notification Letter in February 2022.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 Members are invited to consider and comment on this report.

.....  
**Pete Wildman**  
**Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer**  
**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021**