

Agenda Item 6

Electoral Registration Update



AGENDA ITEM 6

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Subject: Electoral Registration Update
Meeting: Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board
Date: 3rd March 2023
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 September 2022.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on ongoing and future work.

2.0 ANNUAL CANVASS 2022

- 2.1 The canvass went smoothly and was completed on time, though recruiting canvassers proved more challenging than previous years. As the new style canvass has settled in it has become clear that the majority of the follow up activity for Route 2 properties is for the same households each year.
- 2.2 The canvass process involves us matching the register against DWP records and local data sets, where all electors in a property match against another database, the property is put into "Route 1", this was most properties. Where one or more electors do not match, the property is put into "Route 2". For larger type establishments such as Care Homes and University Accommodation these are put into "Route 3".
- 2.3 For properties in "Route 1" where we held an email address for one or more electors, we issue an email asking them to confirm that the details we hold are correct and to notify us of any changes. Where we don't hold an email address for any of the electors or we don't get a response to our email we issue a paper communication advising who is registered at the property and asking people to only respond if there has been a change. We do not carry out any follow up activity for properties in Route 1.



- 2.4 For those properties in Route 2 we issue a letter asking them to go online and confirm if the details we held were correct and to notify us of any changes. For those that do not respond we issue a full canvass form. If we still get no response we contact people by telephone and/or house to house enquiries.
- 2.5 For those properties in Route 3 we made direct contact with the organisations responsible for the properties and obtained the information directly rather than via a property communication.
- 2.6 The table below sets out a comparison of metrics between the last three canvasses.

	2020	2021	2022
DWP Match Rate	82.70%	73.20%	72.75%
Match Rate Post Local Data Matching	78.10%	75.60%	76.01%
Number of Properties in Route 1	111,510	108,983	109,998
Number of Properties in Route 2	31,250	34,589	34,723
Number of Properties in Route 3	2304	1819	2056
e-comms used in Route 1	Y	Y	Y
Response rate to e-comms (%)	N/A	28.8%	28.6%
Route 2 overall response rate (%)	47%	58%	58%

- 2.7 The updated Register of Electors was published on 1 December 2022. At which point there were 225,599 electors on the Parliamentary Register and 237,482 electors on the Local Government Register.

3.0 VOTER AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

- 3.1 As part of the reforms brought about by the UK Government's Elections Act 2022, will be the need, In Scotland, to produce proof of identity at Polling Stations for UK Parliamentary by-elections and Recall Petitions for UK Parliamentary constituencies with effect from 4 May 2023. It is intended that from autumn 2023 the requirement to produce proof of identity will extend to UK Parliamentary General Elections.
- 3.2 The Elections Act 2022 sets out a list of the forms of photographic identity documents that will be allowed as proof of identity in Polling Stations. The list includes documents such as passports, photographic



driving licences, and bus passes. Most electors, research by the UK Government suggests 96% or more, will have such documents but for those electors who don't have those documents they can apply to the ERO for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

- 3.3 The application process for VACs went live on 16 January 2023. Applications can be made online at www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or by way of a paper application form. The ERO administration of the applications is by way of an online Portal, where we accept, reject or request more information for the applications received. The actual certificates are printed by a third party supplier and are either sent to the elector's address or can be collected from our office at Hillside House. As of 22 February 2023, we had received 11 applications.
- 3.4 For those Anonymous Electors who aren't postal voters we will need to issue them with an Anonymous Electors Document, we must write out to those electors by 16 March 2023 inviting them to apply for such a document. At the present time we are waiting on delivery of the unique paper required for these documents.

4.0 OTHER WORK

- 4.1 We promoted the Electoral Commission's "Welcome to your Vote Week" in January 2023, which was aimed at young electors.
- 4.2 Through the Scottish Assessors Association, we are working with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as they begin preparation work for the implementation of the remaining measures contained within the UK Government's Elections Act namely.
- Extension of the Overseas Electors franchise to remove the 15 year limit.
 - Online Absent Vote Applications for UK Parliamentary Elections
 - Postal Votes for UK Parliamentary Elections will expire after three years unlike applications for the Local Government register which will remain indefinite but with a signature refresh required every five year.
 - For a UK Parliament Elections a person will only be able to be a proxy for no more than two people even if they are family members. Although a person will be able to be a proxy for up to four Overseas or Service Electors at a UK Parliamentary Election.

At a local level I have been asked to take part in private beta testing of the online application process, which I have agreed to.



- 4.3 It should be noted that the Scottish Government has no plans, at this time, to introduce online applications for postal votes when the service starts for UK Elections. They have also not indicated that they will align the current 5 yearly refresh of signatures of postal voters for Scottish Elections with the three yearly renewal due to come in for UK Elections. The differing approaches will mean that in future postal voters eligible to vote in both UK and Scottish elections will need to complete two separate application processes.
- 4.4 We are working with the Returning officer for Stirling Council to deliver the Dunblane and Bridge of Allan by-election on 16 March 2023.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

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Pete Wildman
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer
Date: 3rd March 2023