

**REPORT TO: TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD – 22 AUGUST 2016**

**REPORT ON: ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

**REPORT BY: ASSESSOR**

**REPORT NO: TVJB 18-2016**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report seeks to update members on recent Electoral Registration issues relating to the Scottish Parliamentary Election and the Referendum on Membership of the European Union.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board note that the content of the report.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The costs of administering Electoral Registration for the Scottish Parliamentary Election and the Referendum on Membership of the European Union will primarily be met from the existing Revenue Budget for 2016/17 as approved by the Board at the meeting on 25 January 2016. A small additional amount (£17,800) will be provided by the UK Government (Cabinet Office) in relation to additional costs incurred as a result of the extension of the deadline for registration applications prior to the Referendum.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti-Poverty and Equality Impact Assessment. There are no major issues.

## **5 SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION – 5 MAY 2016**

5.1 Notice that the Scottish Parliamentary Election would take place on 5 May 2016 was formally issued on Monday, 14 March 2016, although the date of the election was widely known before that time.

5.2 In preparation for the election numerous planning and preparatory meetings were attended with the election teams of both Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils. Representatives of Police Scotland also attended meetings where appropriate.

5.3 Arrangements were made covering all necessary elements of the election process relating to Electoral Registration including; the arrangements for the registration of new electors, postal voters and proxy voters, the issue of poll cards, postal votes, proxy votes, the printing of polling registers and related data file transfers. The relevant risks were assessed and, where appropriate, contingency arrangements were put in place.

5.4 During the period between publication of the Register on 1 December 2015 and the date of the election 10,046 electors were added to the Registers. 206,367 poll cards were issued and 38,628 electors opted to vote by post. A statistical breakdown of the Electoral Register for Angus Council and Perth & Kinross Council at the election is attached as an Appendix.

5.5 This election was the second to be undertaken on the basis of the new system of Individual Electoral Registration, and the first following the introduction of the Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Act 2015 which extended the franchise for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections to include persons aged between 16 and 18 on the date of the poll. In total some 4,034 young persons were added to the Register and were entitled to vote on the day of the election.

5.6 Notwithstanding that the provisions the new system of Individual Electoral Registration and extended franchise presented a number of challenges in the run up to the election; the event passed without incident and in Electoral Registration terms, the election was a success.

## **6 REFERENDUM ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – 23 JUNE 2016**

6.1 Although widely debated, the actual date of the Referendum on Membership of the European Union was announced on Monday, 22 February 2016.

6.2 Following the announcement detailed preparations were made for the Referendum. In many instances the procedures could, with due adjustment, replicate those of the Scottish Parliamentary Election. Notwithstanding, detailed planning was undertaken and the Referendum was treated as an entirely separate exercise. Planning proceeded in a similar fashion to that outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this report. Particular attention was paid to the fact that, unlike the position for the Scottish Parliamentary Election, young persons and EU Citizens were not entitled to vote in the Referendum. Publicity to this effect was arranged via the Electoral Commission, in the press, on television and on other media. A detailed statistical breakdown of the changes made to the Electoral Register in the run up to the Referendum is included within the Appendix.

6.3 One unplanned change that occurred was that on the evening of the last date for receipt of applications to be added to the Electoral Register before the Referendum, the UK Government's on-line registration service was overloaded, meaning that a number of applicants were unable to register. In the light of this unforeseen event the UK Government took to steps to enact emergency legislation that extended the deadline for applications by two days. This unexpected change presented a number of difficulties and resulted in the printing of polling station lists being delayed by several days. Ultimately the polling station lists were delivered to the Counting Officers on E-3 (i.e. the third day before the poll) which gave relatively little time for the checking and distribution of ballot boxes.

6.4 Notwithstanding the difficulties referred to above, in Electoral Registration terms, the Referendum passed without incident and I am very grateful to all members of staff, to the constituent authority election teams, and also to the Board's external suppliers for their very hard work in ensuring that this was the case.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Clerk and Treasurer to the Board have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None.

## Appendix

### Scottish Parliament Election – 5 May 2016

	Angus	Perth & Kinross	Total
Total Number of new electors added since publication of the Register (1 December 2015) to deadline for registration for Scottish Parliament Election (18 April 2016)	5,755	4,291	10,046
Poll Cards issued to cater for new electors and changes in voting preferences	90,769	115,598	206,367
Eligible Electors aged 18+ on polling day	87,686	111,210	198,896
Electors aged 16/17 on polling day	1,646	2,388	4,034
Total Number of Postal Voters	16,016	22,612	38,628
Number of electors whose Postal Vote was rejected	269	293	562
Number of electors whose PV was cancelled following issue of rejection notice	30	34	64

### Referendum on Membership of the European Union – 23 June 2016

	Angus	Perth & Kinross	Total
Total Number of new electors added since publication of Register (1 December 2015) to (extended) deadline for registration for EU Referendum (9 June 2016)	7,732	10,202	17,934
Poll Cards Issued to cater for new electors and changes in voting preferences	88,263	111,412	199,675
Number of new Overseas electors added between 17 March 2016 and 9 June 2016	166	276	442
Number of new applications received after deadline extended from 8 June 2016 to 9 June 2016	209	266	475
Electorate eligible to vote on polling day	87,137	110,224	197,361
Postal Voters	16,912	24,049	40,961
Number of electors whose Postal Vote was rejected	236	388	624
Number of electors whose PV was cancelled following issue of rejection notice	To be sent 15 August 2016		

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