

**REPORT TO: TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD – 23 JANUARY 2023**

**REPORT ON: ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – ELECTIONS ACT**

**REPORT BY: ASSESSOR**

**REPORT NO: TVJB 1-2023**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report seeks to update the Joint Board on additional duties which will require to be carried out by the Electoral Registration Officer following introduction of the Elections Act.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Joint Board note that:

- The Elections Act 2022 was granted Royal Assent on 28 April 2022.
- Secondary legislation, which will provide many of the details of the administrative processes, will follow.
- The requirement to show photographic ID, to be allowed to vote at polls for UK Parliamentary elections only, is the first change to come into effect. Individuals without such ID will be able to apply to the Electoral Registration Officer for a 'Voter Authority Certificate' via an online facility which is scheduled to go live on 16 January 2023.
- The Voter Authority Certificate will be an A4 paper-based document, with appropriate security features, displaying only the elector's name, photograph, date of issue, issuing authority, an alphanumeric reference, and a recommended renewal date.
- These certificates will be issued via a central agency, except in the period immediately prior to relevant elections when EROs will need to issue these directly. Any temporary documents issued by the ERO will be valid for the specific election only.
- The deadline for applications to obtain a Voter Authority Certificate for elections is 5pm, 6 working days before the poll, with emergency proxy procedures being available to anyone who loses their ID thereafter up until 5pm on polling day.
- The Electoral Commission intends to roll out a public awareness campaign in relation to the above change in Scotland ahead of a UK Parliament general election.
- A further change, due to be implemented in summer 2023, is an amendment to the existing Postal Vote signature refresh period arrangements to change this from the current 5 years to 3 for UK Parliamentary elections, at which point a reapplication will require to be made, whilst maintaining the 5 year refresh period for Scottish elections.
- Electoral management system suppliers will upgrade functionality and new processes will be implemented accordingly, but Members should be aware of the potential for elector confusion and administrative complexity due to the divergence that will exist between Scotland and the rest of the UK as a result of the above changes.
- Other changes to be introduced in due course include the introduction of an online absent vote application service, removal of the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas, and a limit to be imposed on the number of electors a person can be appointed to act as proxy for.
- In order to cope with the increased workload which will be generated as a result of the above changes, the Electoral Registration Officer intends to put in place

additional capacity by upskilling five existing members of clerical staff to enable them to contribute to electoral registration work as required.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The UK Government has agreed to provide funding to reflect additional staff admin time and training costs involved in processing Voter Authority Certificate applications. Funding of £6,250 for 2022/23 and £6,607 for 2023/24 has been allocated to the electoral registration function in the Angus Council and Perth and Kinross Council areas and this will be utilised towards resourcing the upskilling of staff noted above, together with any related IT and licensing costs.

### **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 BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The UK Government has enacted this legislation with the intention of strengthening the integrity of the electoral process by protecting against issues such as electoral fraud and intimidation against candidates, campaigners or elected office holders. Other aims include provision of more support for disabled people at the polling booth and introduction of measures to expand participation in elections. For full details of the changes to the electoral system introduced by the Act, it can be found at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/37/contents/enacted>.

### **6 CONSULTATION**

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

### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

**ROY CHRISTIE**  
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

**January 2023**