

REPORT TO: TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD – 22 JANUARY 2024

REPORT ON: ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – ELECTIONS ACT

REPORT BY: ASSESSOR

REPORT NO: TVJB 4-2024

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to update the Joint Board on the latest additional duties requiring to be carried out by the Electoral Registration Officer following introduction of the Elections Act 2022.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Joint Board note that:

- On 23 October 2023, the statutory instrument to implement changes for British citizens living overseas was laid before Parliament. These changes are currently scheduled to come into effect from 16 January this year.
- The 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas will be removed. Overseas electors will be able to register at a UK address where they were previously registered, or if never registered, at the UK address where they were last resident. The registration period will be extended from one year up to three years. As is currently the case, overseas voters will be eligible to vote in elections to the UK Parliament only. They cannot vote in local council elections or Scottish Parliament elections.
- Following approval of the changes, new online registration applications from overseas electors will be received by Electoral Registration Officers for processing via the ERO Portal, although paper applications will continue to be available. Renewal applications will need to be submitted by email or on paper pending the development of an online renewal service.
- For public awareness purposes, the Electoral Commission has produced initial information on the above changes on their website, and intends to publish further guidance/undertake a communications campaign to raise awareness amongst British nationals living abroad. The UK Government intends to support the Commission’s work, with the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office being a primary channel used to promote the changes. Messaging will also appear on GOV.UK pages.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The UK Government has agreed to provide funding to reflect additional staff admin time, training, communication and engagement costs involved in implementing changes introduced as a result of the Elections Act. Total funding of £22,822 for 2023/24 has been allocated to the electoral registration function in the Angus Council and Perth and Kinross Council areas.

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 CONSULTATION

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

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

ROY CHRISTIE
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

January 2024