

ASSESSOR'S APRIL 2016 KEY WORK ITEMS REPORT TO THE JOINT BOARD



11 April 2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

As the timing of this meeting could theoretically generate an end of year performance report, which in practical terms is best provided along with the unaudited accounts in June, I have decided not to provide such a report at this time and only highlight key dates and immediate priorities. The report is to advise and update members as to the priorities, current issues and key dates for the services of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

2.0 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION SERVICE PRIORITIES, CURRENT ISSUES AND KEY DATES

2.1 Scottish Parliamentary Election 5TH May 2016

- Poll cards and letters were delivered around 17th March 2016;
- Letters were issued late March to all households in the Lothians where there are currently no electors registered alerting them to the need to register for the election;
- Cut-off date for new postal votes, to be included in the **first** batch of posting around 14th April, was 24th March;
- Deadline for receiving applications for registration to vote in the SPE is Monday 18th April;
- Deadline for receiving new postal and postal proxy vote applications for the SPE is Tuesday 19th April at 5pm;
- 2nd and final delivery of postal vote packs around 26th April;
- Deadline for receiving new proxy vote applications for the SPE is Tuesday 26th April at 5pm;

- Deadline for receiving emergency proxy vote applications for the SPE is 5pm on election day;
- Letters will be delivered advising where absent vote identifiers have not matched around 16th May inviting fresh identifiers to maintain the absent votes.

2.2 European Union Referendum 23rd June 2016

- Poll cards and letters to be delivered around 20th May 2016;
- Cut-off date for new postal votes for overseas electors, to be included in the first batch of posting around 24th May, is 10th May;
- Cut off date for new postal votes, to be included in the first batch of posting around 1st June, is 16th May;
- Deadline for receiving applications for registration to vote in the Referendum is Tuesday 7th June;
- Deadline for receiving new postal and postal proxy vote applications for the Referendum is Wednesday 8th June at 5pm;
- 2nd and final delivery of postal vote packs around 15th June;
- Deadline for receiving new proxy vote applications for the Referendum is Wednesday 15th June at 5pm;
- Deadline for receiving emergency proxy vote applications for the Referendum is 5pm on election day;
- Letters will be delivered advising where absent vote identifiers have not matched in early July inviting fresh identifiers to maintain the absent votes.

2.3 2016 Annual Canvass

- Commence the household canvass with postal delivery of Household Enquiry Forms from 1st August 2016;
- Continue engagement activities to encourage registration;
- Commence issue of Invitations to Register from late August 2016;
- Carry out door to door 'annual' canvass for July through to November;
- Process all forms and applications received;

- Publish the Electoral Register on 1st December 2016;
- Carry out the refresh of signatures for absent voters whose signatures are five years old by January 2017.

3.0 COUNCIL TAX SERVICE PRIORITIES, CURRENT ISSUES AND KEY DATES

- Continue to enter new dwellings in the Council Tax List and delete properties no longer defined as a dwelling;
- Update records by carrying out the survey of Council Tax subjects which have been altered and not sold;
- Continue to resolve proposals and appeals against Council Tax banding and answer enquiries;
- Continue to respond to enquiries from elected members and political parties.

4.0 NON DOMESTIC RATING SERVICE PRIORITIES, CURRENT ISSUES AND KEY DATES

4.1 Maintenance of the Non-Domestic Valuation Roll

- Prepare cases as may be required by the Valuation Appeal Committee;
- Schedule and action the disposal of running roll appeals;
- Survey and value new property or alterations to existing properties to ensure the Valuation Roll is as complete and accurate as possible;

4.2 2017 Revaluation

- Continue to update databases with rent, cost, turnover and throughput information to ensure analysis is as complete and accurate as possible;
- Draft local and Scottish Assessors' Association practice Notes for use and publication
- Continue to derive rates and carry out valuations in preparation for the 2017 Revaluation;
- Provide uploads of revised Net Annual Values for use by the Scottish Government for budget purposes in line with agreed timetable;

- Complete draft Net Annual Values by 30th September 2016;
- Prepare for publication of draft Net Annual Values by mid December 2016.
- Issue Revaluation Notices mid-March 2017

5.0 HUMAN RESOURCES AND OFFICE MANAGEMENT

5.1 Records Management

I have been advised that my Records Management Plan is to be recommended for approval to The Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

I will continue to work with my Records Management Group to improve protocols and record keeping.

5.2 Staffing

I have recruited 3 additional temporary Customer Support Assistants to provide additional assistance during the election periods and autumn canvass.

As a result of a recent Supreme Court decision I need to reconsider the unit of assessment for a large number of properties in preparation for the 2017 revaluation. I have recruited 3 temporary Referencers to assist with the required survey work and ancillary tasks.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

As there are no financial implications, nor approvals sought, the Joint Board is requested to note the contents of this report.

Joan M Hewton
ASSESSOR & ERO

4th April 2016