

SL(5)482 – The Representation of the People (Annual Canvass) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Background and Purpose

These Regulations (and the Representation of the People (Annual Canvass) (Amendment) Regulations 2019) provide for the reformed annual canvass to apply to a register of local government electors in Wales.

These Regulations are part of a package of statutory instruments that will ensure the same changes to the annual canvass are introduced across Great Britain.

According to the Explanatory Memorandum to these Regulations:

“In its current form, the annual canvass prescribed in legislation focuses on process (e.g. the number of canvass forms to be sent to each household) rather than outcomes (e.g. the accuracy and completeness of the register). It is heavily paper based, inefficient and outdated, leaving little scope for digital innovation.”

The reformed canvass is intended to be less prescriptive and therefore more permissive. The objectives of the canvass reform are:

- to make the process simpler and clearer for citizens;
- for EROs to have greater discretion to run a tailored canvass which better suits their local area;
- to reduce the administrative burden on EROs and the financial burden on taxpayers;
- to safeguard the completeness and accuracy of the registers;
- to maintain the security and integrity of the registers;
- to include the capacity for innovation and improvement, with a model that is adaptable to future change.

Procedure

Affirmative.

Technical Scrutiny

No points are identified for reporting under Standing Order 21.2 in respect of this instrument.

Merits Scrutiny

One point is identified for reporting under Standing Order 21.3 in respect of this instrument.

1. Standing Order 21.3(ii) - that it is of political or legal importance or gives rise to issues of public policy likely to be of interest to the Assembly



We note, and welcome, the helpful and thorough information provided in the Explanatory Memorandum to these Regulations, including the detailed list of “Matters of special interest to the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee” in paragraph 2.

We note how these Regulations rely on The Government of Wales Act 2006 (Amendment) Order 2019 (the section 109 Order). We also note that the section 109 Order has now been made and that it came into force on 18 December 2019. Nevertheless, we agree that it was appropriate to lay these Regulations when they were laid (i.e. before the section 109 Order was made), in order to give the Assembly sufficient time for scrutiny.

Implications arising from exiting the European Union

None.

Government Response

A government response is not required.

Committee Consideration

The Committee considered the instrument at its meeting on 6 January 2020 and reports to the Assembly in line with the reporting point above.

