Item 1

12th November 2026

Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee

Report by The Electoral Registration Officer for Glasgow

Contact: William McFarlane Work Mobile: 07826 850 472

AUTOMATIC (DIRECT) VOTER REGISTRATION

Purpose of Report:

To update the Committee on progress in developing proposals for Automatic or Direct Voter Registration.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

(a) notes the Report;

(b) authorises the Electoral Registration Officer to design and propose a parallel UK and Scotland AVR pilot with other interested EROs in Scotland.

(c) agrees that a further progress report be presented to the Committee in Summer 2027.

Ward No(s): Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At its' meeting on 05 March 2026 the Committee agreed that Officers should bring forward AVR pilot design proposals after the Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2026.

2.0 Background

2.1 The UK Government introduced a Representation of the People Bill 2026 which had a second reading in the House of Lords on 14 September 2026. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10876/

2.2 The bill contains provisions for direct registration pilots which appear to be a clear focus of policy makers and the bill.

2.3 On Monday 02 November 2026 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) issued guidance on their proposed direct registration and direct alteration pilots.

3.0 ERO Comments on the MHCLG and Scottish AVR Pilots

3.1 The MHCLG and Scottish pilots will both focus on local datasets but follow different routes for proposal and potential approval of any pilot request.

3.2 There remains the potential that an expanded range of UK datasets may become available in future, but are not currently in scope for this round of pilots. Relying solely on local datasets will limit the potential of any pilot proposals.

3.3 Maintaining register accuracy and ensuring continued public confidence is a fundamental and key principle.

3.4 Participation in a parallel Scotland and UK Pilot would avoid the situation where a Scottish pilot could only update the Local Government register (also used for Scottish Parliamentary elections) and not the UK Parliament register.

3.5 Having a pilot that allowed an elector to be direct registered or direct altered on both registers, would avoid some instances of divergence in the contents of both registers and minimise confusion for registered electors.

4.0 Actions and next steps

4.1 The Glasgow ERO acknowledges the requirement to bring forward pilot design proposals and had the bill progressed as originally planned, this may have been possible sooner.

4.2 Now that the UK Pilot provisions are known, we will now be in a position to move forward with parallel proposals to UK and Scottish Government officials.

4.3 The ERO will return to the committee in the summer of 2027 with a report outlining whether our pilot proposals have been accepted and the delivery timescales for the pilots.

5 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	Work undertaken will require to be within existing resources.
Legal:	No impact
Personnel:	No impact
Procurement:	No impact

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 4, Mission 2 - Run an open, well-governed council in partnership with all our communities

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	No impact
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	No impact
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	No impact

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	No impact
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	No impact
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	No impact

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	
Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report	No
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

(a) notes the Report;

(b) authorises the Electoral Registration Officer to design and propose a parallel UK and Scotland AVR pilot with other interested EROs in Scotland.

(c) agrees that a further progress report be presented to the Committee in Summer 2027.