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**INTERIM ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND  
ACTION NOTE: 10 August 2011 2:00pm  
City of Edinburgh Council HQ**

**Present:**

- **Board members:** Billy Pollock (WP) (AEA rep), Mary Pitcaithly, Convener & RO, David Anderson RO (DA), Joan Hewton ERO (JH), Stuart Galloway DRO (SG)
- **Advisers:** Sarah Mackie (SM Electoral Commission)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH) (Secretary to the Board)

		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malcolm Burr (MB) Andy O'Neill (AON), David Freeland (DF) (Electoral Commission), Steve Sadler (SS), Fiona Campbell (FC), Andy Sinclair (AS), Alex Thomson (AT) (Scottish Government), Roddy Angus (RA), Jackie Galbraith (JG) (Scotland Office), Gordon Blair (GB) (SOLAR rep), Brian Byrne (BB) (SAA rep)</li></ul>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Previous Action note</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Noted and approved as an accurate record</li></ul>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Issues arising from 5 May Electoral Events: Scottish Parliamentary Elections and Referendum on the Voting System for UK Parliamentary Elections</b>	<p><b>Letter (6 July) from Chair of the Electoral Commission, responding to Board's letter of 14 June – both letters circulated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Noted</li></ul> <p><b>Letter to Electoral Commission re Fees and Charges Reporting – circulated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Noted</li><li>• The recent bulletin from the Electoral Commission regarding the treatment of CO fees was also noted.</li></ul> <p><b>Referendum Verification and Count Timing - circulated</b></p>	

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		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This analysis was provided from City of Edinburgh Council staff who has worked to support the RCO and was welcomed as useful. <b>ACTION</b> CH to check against estimates of finish times made prior to the election.</li></ul>	

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4	<p><b>Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 2012</b></p>	<p><b>SOLAR Comments on draft legislation - circulated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOLAR Elections Group had convened to analyse and produce a commentary on draft Order. <b>ACTION</b> EMB agreed to endorse these comments and adopt them as its own response to the draft Order.</li> <li>• Draft timetable – Forms Group has drafted an initial timetable. Noted</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> Order should also be amended to state that Notice of Poll should be published as soon as practicable, needs a change to Rule 24</li> </ul> <p><b>E Counting Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update from AT on the progress of the project was noted</li> <li>• Bulk Test of System (Perth) currently in progress. <b>ACTION</b> CH to seek comments from ROs as to their perception of the system and the Bulk Test. These to be fed into User Group to feed into key stage 4 review.</li> <li>• There was some reported concern that there needs to be additional attention given to the ballot box preparation, the only point when papers are visible to observers. A separate layout is needed for this activity</li> <li>• ROs still to attend were encouraged to ensure their staff saw every aspect of the process.</li> <li>• Note that RO will need the count premises from the Monday morning</li> </ul> <p><b>Contract issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that the user agreements are based on old electorate figures and do not allow for racking <b>ACTION</b> – bulletin to be circulated from highlighting these issues. Note the potential for a national contract for shelving etc.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">CH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CH</p>
5	<p><b>EMB Work Programme for 2011/12 – Proposed elements</b></p>	<p><b>Guidance / Direction around timetable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> Board to promote consistency around key areas of election timetable in 2012.</li> <li>• Aim for a common date for poll card and postal vote dispatch               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Date of postal vote dispatch <b>aim to have all dispatched by 23</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">CH</p>

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		<p><b>April</b> This will need information from O2V and Postal Vote suppliers. ACTION CH to contact ROs to assess timings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Poll card issue <b>1 April</b></li> <li>○ Note that these are guidance rather than directions</li> <li>○ <b>ACTION</b> draft timetable to be circulated for guidance.</li> <li>○ Aim all out <b>by 23 April</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION</b> Publish notice of election as early as possible to give longest nomination period</li> </ul> <p><b>Consistent “Purdah” / Pre-election period rules for 2012</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION</b> Board to issue advice re the date and encourage authorities to share good practice. This is an issue where local practice should be maintained.</li> <li>● SM noted that the National Communications Advisory Board was to meet on Friday and there was a clear desire on the part of the Councils that we should pursue some measure of consistency around Purdah for the Council elections, not least the date on which it comes into force. Stewart Argo from City of Edinburgh Council will lead on this</li> </ul> <p><b>AVI Training – Training and Refresher courses for ROs / DROs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>ACTION</b> CH to contact the forensic science service and organise refresher training for ROs and their staff in time for next year’s elections</li> </ul> <p><b>Forms Working Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The work of the Forms working Group was recognised. The Board is grateful for their efforts and via the next Bulletin all ROs are to be encouraged to use their material. All forms need to remain consistent with Electoral Commission Guidance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Count Issues: Timing, Recount and Adjudication guidance/directions</b></p>	

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		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Timing</b> It is the Scottish Government Assumption that the Count will be on the Friday as in 2003 where there was a regulation that it would not commence before the Friday morning. . <b>ACTION</b> EMB to request that this is clarified within the Elections Order Comments on order, making explicit the assumption that the Count would not be before the Friday</li> <li>• <b>Recount / adjudication</b> – work is needed to develop an approach here. The eCounting system is a major factor and there is a need for clear communications around the results and around the principles at play in adjudication. Politicians need to be involved early in the process as procedures progress. <b>ACTION</b> EC need to ensure that the placements for adjudication reflects reality, experience of recent elections, e.g. voter places only a 2 on the paper next to the second candidate; or on what basis is a paper with two 1’s rejected etc.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> Board to consider guidance on how RO should react to requests for recounts.</li> </ul>	
6	<b>Absent Vote Identifier Refresh</b>	<p><b>Electoral Commission Circular and ERO/SAA Comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note concern from SAA re the position being promoted by the Electoral Commission in their circular. SAA would be happier to see process undertaken in Spring 2013 which is a clear year for elections. All identifiers would then be collected in time for the 2014 elections. Note also that there will be different sets of identifiers : personal identifiers will be date of birth and NI number while absent voters will supply signature and date of birth</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> – Board to write to the Electoral Commission, to seek more tailored guidance for Scotland in time for spring 2013, even if this does need a minor change to the regulations before then.</li> </ul>	
7	<b>EMB Administration</b>	<p><b>Status of the Board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that the Board is no longer Interim but is established in statute</li> </ul> <p><b>Board Membership</b></p>	

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		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convener is still to be appointed. S/he will then appoint other Board members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support / Secretariat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current intention is for City of Edinburgh to continue to provide secretariat support</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Royal Mail issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that there were a number of issues with respect to Royal Mail performance and invoicing</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> Royal Mail management to attend EMB in preparation for future elections</li> </ul>	<b>CH</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>By-elections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current by-elections noted, including Inverclyde and Council by-election in Edinburgh</li> </ul>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted.</li> </ul>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Scottish Political Parties Panel – Issues for future meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted</li> <li>• Politicians had noted that the count arrangements with some ROs counting over night and some the next day had not been popular since it had made it more difficult for them to maintain an oversight of the counts.</li> </ul>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Boundary Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hugh Buchanan to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss new Westminster constituencies</li> </ul>	

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		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
13	<b>Review of Electoral Law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> EMB to write to note that they would wish to be involved in any consultations</li> </ul>	<b>CH</b>
14	<b>Individual Registration – paper circulated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted</li> </ul>	
15	<b>Consultations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electoral Rules for the Crofting Commission – EMB will not formally submit a response, its remit being restricted to statutory elections. However the professional bodies – AEA, SAA and SOLAR would be encouraged to respond.</li> </ul>	
16	<b>Any Other Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that there had been a number of fraudulent application to join the Electoral Register in Lothian. These had been referred to the police.</li> <li>• Highland had raised a couple of legal queries:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Validity of a nomination where the only qualification was employment in the Council area where that employment was as a Councillor</li> <li>○ Potential for Job sharing the role of Councillor.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> – EMB to investigate and seek a consistent approach, with advice / input from the Electoral Commission</li> </ul>	<b>CH</b>
17	<b>Dates of Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There had been a request to rearrange the dates of future EMB meetings so that they were aligned with the COLSA / SOLACE meetings so that attendance would be easier for ROs.</li> <li>• It was proposed that meetings should start at 2pm and could be held in the COSLA offices</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> – CH to investigate and revise meeting schedule.</li> </ul>	
<b>FUTURE DATES – TO BE INTIMATED</b>			

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