

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: 24 February 2012 2:00pm

City of Edinburgh Council HQ


Present:

- **Board members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Brian Byrne (BB ERO, SAA rep), Douglas Gillespie (DG ERO), Bob Jack (RJ RO, Stuart Galloway (SG DRO),) David Anderson (DA RO)
- **Advisers:** David Freeland (DF Electoral Commission) Alex Thomson (AT Scottish Government Consultant) Andy Sinclair (AS Scottish Government) Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government) Jon Harris (JH COSLA), Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission) Billy Pollock (WP DRO AEA rep)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Scobie (SSc Scotland Office) • Joan Hewton (JH ERO) • Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office) • Gordon Blair (GB DRO SOLAR rep) • Malcolm Burr, (MB RO) • Sue Bruce (SB RO) 	Noted
2	Note of Previous Meeting (27 January 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted as an accurate record. • There were no matters arising which were not already on the agenda. 	Noted

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
3	Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 2012	<p>Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All legislation now in place, no more amendment orders expected. Updated Electoral Commission guidance is expected week commencing 27 February. <p>Direction on Count Timing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issued on 7 February. There has been a positive response in general from media, ROs and political parties. <p>Information in the Count Centre for Observers (<i>to be tabled</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers tabled by AT for approval, with information and 3 appendices. Board agreed that it was a useful and valuable set of material that would serve as a good checklist for ROs and DROs. ACTION – change title of paper to” Information relating to the eCount” ACTION – change “Good votes to “Valid votes” Note that it could also be used as part of briefings for Candidates and Agents around the Count . procedures. ACTION CH to circulate to Returning Officers, with covering note stressing that this is guidance listing the key elements to be addressed, to promote consistency and being provided as specimen material for adoption and adaptation. Feedback to be requested. 	<p>CH</p> <p>CH</p> <p>CH</p>

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		<p>“Why have confidence in the system?” draft paper from Gordon Blair (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper circulated by GB. ACTION GB to redraft as FAQs. ROs need to be able to stress that a recount is highly unlikely and that these are the reasons why.... • ACTION – need to have Communications input • ACTION – key messages to be put into Bulletin • There needs to be clear consistency with respect to recounts, such that ROs are clear that the closeness of a result is not an automatic justification for a recount. ROs need to be comfortable that the system and procedures are sound so that they can rebuff calls for recounts merely due to the closeness of a result <p>Printing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT, AS and Aileen Knudsen had visited Logica Printer to watch production of mock election ballot papers. • ACTION mention in Bulletin <p>Mock Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock election process had been useful but had identified a series of issues in the process. The purpose of the mock election had not been clear to all. It was very much a test of the data upload to the Easy Print System rather than a full end to end test for ROs. 	<p>CH</p> <p>GB</p> <p>GB</p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p>Ballot Boxes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS demonstrated the new Ballot Boxes with the cardboard insert as below  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic seals (2) are used to hold the lid in place. 	

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		<p>Adjudication – Doubtful Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following joint briefings there had been a number of additional examples generated about which guidance was sought including a “sad face” and the use of a cross that covers more than one but not all candidates. ACTION a supplement to the placement to be produced. ACTION GB <p>Recounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that The Herald were contacting ROs to follow up on their understanding that Glasgow were considering undertaking any recounts on the Saturday morning. George Black has since clarified that this is only an option and not the preferred arrangement. AS stressed that there should be sufficient time to complete all necessary counts and any recounts on the Friday. Note the additional costs associated with retaining a Count Venue into the Saturday and the additional charges from Logica. <p>Results Publishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There had been a request received from the Forms Group that the Board consider promoting consistency of presentation with respect to the election results so that each RO would publish the same material in the same format. ACTION CH and AS to discuss <p>Update from Electoral Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the next meeting of the PPP is on 7 March. There is an outstanding remit from the PPP for an approach to the aggregation of data from Ballot 	<p>GB</p> <p>CH AS</p> <p>AT</p>

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		<p>Boxes where necessary. ACTION AT to prepare draft for submission to PPP</p> <p>RO Performance Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ROs have responded and any key issues have been reported to Convener <p>Joint Briefings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have been going well. Final sessions are week commencing 27 February. Signature verification material being well received. <p>Public Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AON tabled the posters and leaflet to be used by the Electoral Commission in their publicity campaigns. <p>Postal Voting / Royal Mail issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that CH had clarified to the Royal Mail that even though the Count was not until the Friday morning, there would still be requirement for any postal votes received as part of any sweeps must be in the possession of the Returning Officer by 10pm on the day of poll 	

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4	EMB Administration	<p>EMB Subgroups: Forms Group / Communication Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms were now available for download and were being widely used • Note that the Community of Practice site was being shut down and all forms would migrate to a new site. ACTION all to be encouraged to download all forms now; mention in Bulletin. • Communication network was well engaged in public awareness activities 	<p>Noted</p> <p>CH</p>
5	Bulletin / Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTION ALL to assist CH in the preparation of a new Bulletin. • CH to circulate request for pieces for bulletin. 	ALL
6	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted. Neither the Convener nor the Secretary had attended recent meetings due to diary pressure and lack of relevance for Scottish elections. • For reference, papers are available at http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/elections-and-referendums-working-groups) 	Noted
7	Political Parties Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting 7 March 	Noted
8	Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that the EMB needs to prepare responses to both the Scottish Government and Scotland Office consultations on the Referendum. Scotland Office consultation deadline is 9 March. • ACTION – BB has drafted an SAA response. CH to use this as basis of EMB response. 	BB CH
10	Any Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note potential for industrial action around time of close of nominations • ACTION ALL to consider as potential risk • Verification tolerances – to be considered at next meeting. 	ALL

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that Logica are considering requesting that ROs allow them to display some branding at the Counts – Tshirts, table cloths etc. ACTION ROs to discuss with their own project managers 	
11	Dates of future meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The date of next meeting to be changed Convener is unavailable on 30 March 2012 ACTION CH to identify alternative <p>The following dates were agreed for the EMB meetings in 2012, starting at 2pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 April 2012 25 May 2012 29 June 2012 31 August 2012 28 September 2012 19 October 2012 16 November 2012 14 December 2012 	<p>CH</p> <p>NOTED</p>
Date of next meeting TO BE ARRANGED			