

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: 20 April 2012 2:00pm

City of Edinburgh Council HQ

**Present:**

- **Board members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Brian Byrne (BB ERO, SAA rep), Joan Hewton (JH ERO), Bob Jack (RJ RO), David Anderson (DA RO) Malcolm Burr, (MB RO) Gordon Blair (GB DRO SOLAR rep) Stuart Galloway (SG DRO) Sue Bruce (SB RO)
- **Advisers:** David Freeland (DF Electoral Commission) Alex Thomson (AT Scottish Government Consultant) Andy Sinclair (AS Scottish Government) Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government) Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission)</li> <li>• Douglas Gillespie (DG ERO)</li> <li>• Billy Pollock (WP DRO AEA rep)</li> <li>• Jon Harris (JH COSLA),</li> </ul>	Noted
2	Note of Previous Meeting (30 March 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepted as an accurate record.</li> <li>• There were no matters arising which were not already on the agenda.</li> </ul>	Noted

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
3	Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 2012	<p><b>Potential risk of industrial action (fuel deliveries)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risks had been discussed with Royal Mail and Logica who had provided assurance that they had adequate contingencies to support the election in the event of fuel shortages</li> </ul> <p><b>Adjudication of Doubtful Papers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplementary Guidance issued by the EMB had been well received. This provides clear and consistent guidance on adjudication.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other EMB Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMB FAQs on the eCounting system and recounts had also been well received</li> <li>Guidance on the use of additional security seals on ballot boxes had been issued and had prompted Logica to issue adhesive seals to all ROs, 4 per box plus spares.</li> </ul> <p><b>E Counting Project Board Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecounting Project Board had requested a Communications Plan which would identify who was responsible for all various elements of the communications around the election. AS noted that this would be shared at the Project Board which was to follow this EMB, with a clear statement of roles and responsibilities. It would support planning for press and media involvement and be a good resource of local RO media teams.</li> <li>It is clear that the last word and ultimate responsibility in any communications lies with the Returning Officer.</li> </ul>	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p><b>Printing</b></p> <p><b>Ballot Papers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Ballot Papers had now been produced and delivered to Returning Officers and postal pack suppliers, except for those for the Islands which were expected shortly.</li> <li>• Ballot Paper Tray Labels - there had been some complaints regarding the poor quality of the printing of the labels. Logica/Opt2Vote had given assurance that the standard was sufficient to allow scanning and also would supply spare supplies to every RO.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> ALL to check and test the labels</li> </ul> <p><b>Postal Votes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BB noted that there had been a couple of system failures at EROs which had led to difficulties in providing the data to printers.</li> <li>• This highlights the tight timetable that still exists for the production of postal voting materials. Given the fixed dates for elections, revising legal deadlines to be earlier than -11 would be in the interest of the voter and remove unnecessary time pressures.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ballot Boxes / Seals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As noted above Logica will be supplying additional seals for all Ballot Boxes. They have committed to deliver them to Returning Officers by 27 April.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ALL</b></p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p><b>Count Staff Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been positive feedback from ROs and DROs regarding the quality of the training at these elections as compared to 2007.</li> </ul> <p><b>Results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that there had been some discussion at SOLACE regarding how results should be presented. Some ROs were considering using the screens for briefing candidates and agents showing them the results on screen as the calculations were completed. MP noted that this had been done at the Crofting elections in Inverness and had worked well.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> ROs could take this approach as long as it was in a private area or a private briefing area was created. However, in some areas it was accepted that the size of the count would not allow this.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> AS to supply results pro formas for staff training</li> <li>• <b>ACTION</b> AS to mention in the next Q&amp;A Bulletin</li> <li>• SG had completed an analysis which identified which reports from the eCounting system should be published in order to meet the legal requirements for publication according to rule 56. <b>ACTION</b> CH to issue as guidance.</li> <li>• SS noted that some of the PPP had requested additional voting information should be made available after the election, with the full preference information being published. It was understood that this data can be harvested from the system but to publish would require a change in the law. The Scottish Government were considering enacting such a change allowing this data to be released. <b>ACTION</b> ALL ROs to be made aware of this.</li> </ul>	<p>CH</p> <p>AS</p> <p>CH</p> <p>Noted</p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p><b>Communications Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be shared with Ecounting Project Board as noted above</li> </ul> <p><b>Update from Electoral Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DF noted some issues which had occupied the Electoral Commission in recent days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The nomination of a mannequin in Aberdeen</li> <li>○ The death of a candidate in Dunoon</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Significant advice had been required, but both issues were now resolved and in hand</li> <li>• Aberdeen issue to be addressed in any debrief – <b>GB</b> stated that the EMB should lobby for the candidate to deliver the nomination papers.</li> </ul> <p><b>RO Performance Standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No issues of concern</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign is continuing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observers – the EC would have a presence in 22 areas of the country at PV openings, polling and the count. EC staff from Belfast would be assisting.</li> </ul>	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p><b>Postal Voting / Royal Mail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No issues not covered elsewhere.</li> </ul> <p><b>EMB Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No issues not covered elsewhere.</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual Registration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BB gave a brief outline of the progress towards individual electoral registration and the key issues associated with its implementation.</li> <li>There will be a delayed canvas from 2013, now to take place in January – March 2014, followed by a data matching exercise with the DWP.</li> <li>Note that the Absent Voter Identifier refresh will be in 2014, which will create additional concurrent work and could lead to confusion.</li> </ul>	
4	<b>EMB Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No issues</li> </ul>	
5	<b>Bulletin / Newsletter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further Bulletins to be circulated until after the election.</li> <li>Any additional information to be circulated to ROs / EROS / DROs by email</li> </ul>	
6	<b>Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted. Neither the Convener nor the Secretary had attended recent meetings due to diary pressure and lack of relevance for Scottish elections.</li> <li>For reference, papers are available at <a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/elections-and-referendums-working-groups">http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/elections-and-referendums-working-groups</a> )</li> </ul>	<b>Noted</b>

**ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND**

		<b>NOTE</b>	<b>ACTION / RESPONSIBLE</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Convener had circulated some papers relating to the forthcoming Mayoral elections in England for information.</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Political Parties Panel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next meeting post election</li> </ul>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Consultations</b>	<b>Referendum consultation – Scottish Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMB still to submit a response to the consultation</li> </ul>	<b>CH</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not the Law Commission review of Electoral Law is ongoing</li> </ul>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Dates of future meetings</b>	<b>The EMB will meet on the following dates in 2012, starting at 2pm</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29 May 2012 – <b>NOTE CHANGED DATE</b></li> <li>29 June 2012</li> <li>31 August 2012</li> <li>28 September 2012</li> <li>19 October 2012</li> <li>16 November 2012</li> <li>14 December 2012</li> </ul>	<b>Noted</b>
<b>Date of next meeting 29 May 2012</b>			