

**From:** Chris Highcock

**Sent:** 25 April 2017 17:46

**To: Subject:** UK Parliamentary General Election - Recommendations from the Convener of the EMB



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THE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

## **FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL RETURNING OFFICERS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS**

**UK PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTION 8 JUNE 2017 - RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE  
CONVENER OF THE EMB**

### ***Background***

You will all now be well aware of the impending UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) and I know that you will have already begun to put in place arrangements to deliver the event in the constituencies for which you are responsible. It is always a challenge to run a UK General Election but given that we are all in the midst of the delivering our local government elections, the challenge has become acute.

As convener of the EMB I have no remit to give directions relating to the UKPGE on 8 June. However, following discussion at the Board on Friday, it was decided that it would be helpful to Returning Officers, EROs and their respective teams for me to provide some recommendations on how key elements of the delivery of this event should be aligned across Scotland. The intention as always is to ensure that all elements of planning and delivery are undertaken with the interests of the voter at the heart of decisions. This supports confidence in the result, built on a consistent national approach, where appropriate, with suitable contingency integrated into the processes. The focus of these recommendations is to achieve consistency in the timing of the key voter facing documentation: the Notice of Election, the dispatch of poll cards and the dispatch of postal votes. This allows voters better to plan around the election events and supports political parties and candidates in aligning their campaigning with key events such as the receipt of postal votes.

## Consultation

Before making my directions as Convener of the EMB with respect to the council elections I shared drafts with Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, political parties, campaigners, the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and its advisers including the Scottish Government and the Scotland Office. A number of responses were made and the directions revised in some areas in response. In considering recommendations for the this UKPGE, such extensive consultation has not been possible due to the extremely tight timescale. However, the recommendations have been discussed within the EMB and with Electoral Registration Officers. In addition the Secretary to the EMB has engaged with key print suppliers to confirm that these recommended dates would not pose difficulties in production schedules.

## Recommendations not Directions

As recommendations the proposals below do not carry the force of directions. They are intended to support national consistency but also to inform your own planning. While they do not have the weight of directions, if you have major concerns or objections to them I would be grateful if you could write to explain your concerns.

### **UK Parliamentary General Election 8 June 2017: Recommendations from the Convener of the EMB**

|   | Recommendation   | Commentary   |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | <b>Publication of Notice of Election - Friday 5 May</b>                          | <p>Returning Officers can expect to be in receipt of the Writ from the Royal Mail on 4 May. The notice of election in a particular constituency must be published no later than 4pm on the second day following the receipt of the writ.</p> <p><b>It is recommended that the Notice of Election is published, on Friday 5 May.</b> The delivery of nomination papers must commence the day after the publication of the Notice of Election. A publication date of 5 May allows Nominations to be taken from Monday 8 May. Publishing on receipt of the writ would have nominations commencing on 5 May when RO teams will be otherwise engaged in the eCount for the Scottish Local Government Elections.</p> |
| 2 | <b>Date of dispatch of poll cards - between Monday 15 May and Tuesday 16 May</b> | <p>Legislation requires Returning Officers to issue poll cards as soon as is reasonably practicable after publishing the notice of the election.</p> <p>Producing Poll Cards on the basis of the data from the First Election Notice of Alteration,</p>  |

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|   |   | <p>published on 11 May, would allow the most accurate registration data to be used benefitting from corrections, transfers, additions and deletions subsequent to the Scottish Local Government Elections.</p> <p>ROs should ensure that poll cards are handed over by the printer <b>for dispatch between Monday 15 May and Tuesday 16 May</b>. A narrow window of time is being recommended rather than a single date in order to strive for consistency in voter experience across Scotland while still allowing some element of flexibility for ROs and their printers.</p>  |
| 3 | <p><b>Date of dispatch of postal ballot packs</b><br/> <b>First issue 22/23 May</b><br/> <b>Final issue 30/31 May</b></p> | <p>Legislation states that postal ballot papers and postal voting statements should be issued as soon as is practicable.</p> <p>It is recommended that Returning Officers ensure that the first issue of postal votes is handed over by the printer for dispatch between <b>Monday 22 May and Tuesday 23 May</b>. Arrangements should be made for the postal votes to be issued by first class post. <b>Wherever possible effort should be made to ensure that this issue includes all those postal voters included as at the publication of the Second Interim Election Notice of Alteration on 16 May.</b></p> <p>The final dispatch of postal votes should be handed over by the printer for dispatch between <b>Tuesday 30 May and Wednesday 31 May</b>.</p> |

***Print and Data Upload Schedule***

In addition to these recommendations the EMB has drafted a schedule of dates that you may find useful in planning your work with printers.

- 2 May            Deadline for receipt of applications to register for First Interim Notice of Election (FIENA)
- 3 May (-25)    Parliament dissolved
- 5 May (-23)    Publication of Notice of Election
- 5 May (-23)    Deadline for receipt of applications to register for SIENA

8 May (-22) Nominations open 10am  
8 May Commence issue of AVPI reject notices for LGE (to be confirmed)  
10 May (-20) Pass Poll Card Data to Printers (As at FIENA determination date)  
11 May (-19) Publication of FIENA  
11 May (-19) Close of Nominations 4pm  
12 May (-18) Pass PV1 data to Printers  
15/16 May Poll Cards dispatched  
15 May SIENA determination date, PV data to Printers if possible for inclusion in first issue  
16 May (-16) Publication of SIENA  
22 May (-12) Final deadline for receipt of applications to register (FENA)  
22/23 May PV1 ballot packs dispatched  
23 May (-11) Deadline for receipt of PV applications 5pm  
w/c 29 May 29 AVI reject reminders to be issued this week  
30/31 May PV2 ballot packs dispatched  
31 May (-6) Deadline for receipt of ordinary proxy applications 5pm  
1 June (-5) Publication of FENA  
8 June (0) Election Day  
8 June (0) Deadline for receipt of emergency proxy applications 5pm  
8 June (0) Deadline for clerical errors 9pm

### **Comments**

The electoral community in Scotland has been recognised across the UK for its high standards in planning and delivering a high profile and complex events. As Convener of the EMB I am obviously keen for us to maintain those high standards. Wherever possible we work by consensus but occasionally guidance or direction can be helpful. The proposals above are offered as recommendations to Returning Officers in a spirit of cooperation, mutual support and seeking to learn from recent experience.

If you have any questions about these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Secretary of the EMB, Chris Highcock.

Yours sincerely,

**Mary Pitcaithly**

Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland

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