

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

*A joint Electoral Management Board for
Scotland/Electoral Commission conference*

Glasgow City Chambers, 24 January 2019

Welcome

Malcolm Burr

*Convener of the Electoral Management Board
for Scotland (EMB)*

Dame Susan Bruce

Electoral Commissioner, Scotland

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Electoral Commissioner, Scotland

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

***Session 1: The Policy, Legislative and Regulatory
Framework Officers***

Glasgow City Chambers, 24 January 2019

The Policy, Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- **Maria McCann** - Head of Elections, Scottish Government
- **Chris Highcock** – Secretary of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland
- **Pete Wildman** – Chair of the Electoral Registration Committee of the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA)
- **Andy O'Neill** – Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland
- **Pat O'Callaghan** – Superintendent, Police Scotland Lead SPOC on Elections

Elections are delivered by a community

- **What needs to be done** – legislation gives the rules; potential directions from the EMB Convener
- **Who needs to do it** – ROs; charged with the personal responsibility to deliver the events; vital support from EROs
- **Where can you get support and advice** – Electoral Commission guidance; EMB; peer support/mentoring
- **Who will check that you have done it right** – Electoral Commission Performance Standards



A three-legged stool



- **The Government** - legislation and policy
- **Returning Officers** – delivering the elections according to the rules
- **The Regulator** – ensuring that the rules are followed, improving performance, offering guidance

Each leg must be **separate** from the others

Each leg is needed - take away any of them and the whole thing falls over!

The Role of Government

Maria McCann

*Head of Elections Team, Scottish
Government*

What does the Government have to do with Elections?

- Elections are run by Returning Officers & Ministers are subject to election

So why is the government involved at all?

- Because elections are governed by legislation (the rules) and the government makes legislation

Legislation and Policy

Devolved (Scottish Government)	Reserved (UK, Cabinet Office)
Scottish Parliament Elections	UK Parliamentary Elections
Scottish Local Government Elections	European Parliament Elections
Referendums	Referendums
<i>Franchise for these polls</i>	<i>Franchise for these polls</i>



Election Legislation

- **Secondary** Legislation
 - Conduct order for each election
 - Target of 6 months prior to the event
 - Needs preparation and consultation
- **Primary** Legislation
 - Scotland Act 2016 gave Scottish Parliament powers over Scottish Parliament elections and aspects of electoral registration
 - Scottish Parliament Elections run in and by Scotland for the first time in 2016
 - Successfully delivered by ROs and EROs

Electoral Reform Consultation

- Consultation in 2018 with view to future Primary Legislation
- Topics
 - Term lengths for the Scottish Parliament and local government
 - Running of elections – EMB role; RO role
 - Extension of the franchise to all those with a legal right to live here
 - Boundary issues
 - E voting
- Almost 1000 responses
 - Public & electoral administrators



Electoral Reform: Next Steps

- July 2018 - independent analysis of consultation responses and Scottish Government Response
 - Electoral Reform Bill
 - Currently being drafted, to be introduced later this year
 - Includes additional topics e.g. accountability of the Electoral Commission to the Scottish Parliament
 - Consultation on Prisoner Voting
 - Closes 8 March
 - Franchise Bill

Electoral Law

- Law Commissions' review:
 - 'increasingly complex and fragmented, and difficult to use'*
 - 17 major statutes and some 30 sets of regulations
 - Recommended moves to rationalise, achieve consistency, simplify and modernise
 - Aim to consolidate and simplify conduct orders
- Scottish Government will continue to work in partnership with ROs, EROs and the Electoral Commission to deliver improvements in legislation

The Electoral Management Board for Scotland

Chris Highcock

Secretary of the Electoral Management Board
for Scotland

The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB)

- Set up under the Local Electoral Administration (Scotland) Act 2011
 - Act gives the Board “*the general function of **co-ordinating** the administration of local government elections in Scotland.*”
- Independent of both UK and Scottish Governments; accountable to the Scottish Parliament
- Returning Officers (5), their Deputies and Electoral Registration Officers (3) under the leadership of a Convener who is appointed by Ministers

The EMB's Role

- **History** - 2007 and the Gould Report
 - Not a Chief Returning Officer
 - Consistency, single point of contact with suppliers, economies of scale
- Act and accompanying Policy Memorandum
- Two specifics:
 - (a) **assisting** local authorities and other persons in carrying out their functions in relation to “local government elections”;
 - and
 - (b) **promoting best practice** in local government elections by providing information, advice or training (or otherwise)
- *ensuring that **the interests of the voter** are kept at the centre of all election planning, delivery and administration*

Objective and Principles

- **Explicit in preparation for Independence Referendum but now applied to all events**
- **Objective: “...to deliver a result that will be trusted as accurate”**
- **Principles**
 - **Accessibility** - there should be no barriers to any voter taking part;
 - **Consistency** - voters should have the same experience **wherever** they are in Scotland;
 - **Efficiency** - the referendum will be administered efficiently; and
 - **Integrity** - the referendum will produce results that are accepted as accurate.

The EMB's Approach

- To achieve that Objective and Principles the EMB works through
 - **Consensus:** where **possible**
 - Building on experience and relationships
 - **Guidance:** where **needed**
 - Based on model from Electoral Commission
 - **Directions:** where **appropriate**
 - After consultation

Directions and Recommendations

- 2011 Act gives EMB Convener power to make directions to ROs and EROs for local government elections

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Directions to returning officers

- (1) The convener may give directions in writing to returning officers about the exercise of their functions in relation to—
 - (a) local government elections generally, or
 - (b) a particular local government election.
- (2) A direction may require a returning officer to provide the convener with information.
- (3) A returning officer to whom a direction is given must comply with the direction.

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Directions to electoral registration officers

- (1) The convener may give directions in writing to electoral registration officers about the exercise of their functions in relation to a particular local government election.
- (2) But a direction is of no effect if it is inconsistent with any direction given under section 52 of the 1983 Act.
- (3) An electoral registration officer to whom a direction is given must comply with the direction.

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Consultation before giving direction

Before giving a direction under section 5 or 6, the convener must consult—

- (a) the other members of the Board,
- (b) the Electoral Commission.

Directions and Recommendations

- 2011 Act gives EMB Convener power to make **directions** to ROs and EROs for local government elections
 - In writing
 - RO / ERO **must** comply
 - Convener must first consult with
 - The Board (5 ROs, 3 EROs)
 - The Electoral Commission

Limited simple directions

- **Generally a limited set of directions – keep it simple**
- To guarantee **CONSISTENCY** and promote **CONTINGENCY**
- **E.g. for SIR, Nine Directions made** following consultation
 - Polling Scheme (**800 per station**– but exceptions were fine)
 - Ballot Paper Colour (White/Pink)
 - Official Mark, UIM/Ballot Paper Numbering
 - Poll Card Dispatch Date (14/15 August)
 - Postal Pack Dispatch Date (26/28 August)
 - Ballot Paper Printing (120%)
 - Timing of Count (10pm)
 - Method of verification / count
 - Performance Management Framework
- Later guidance on Accounting for **contingency** papers

Recommendations

- No power of Direction for UK or SP Elections (yet)
- However Convener made similar *recommendations* in 2011, 2015, 2017 to promote consistency & support contingency
- Same model adopted by CCO and RCO for recent referendums where there were similar powers of direction
- Consistency generally now valued by electoral community, by suppliers and by politicians
 - E.g. they know when postal votes will land on doorsteps across the whole country

Support from EMB

- Advice and guidance
 - Seminars
 - Website
- Mentoring
- Specific training – e.g. signature verification with Forensic Science Service
- Engagement with governments

Pete Wildman

Central Scotland Electoral Registration Officer

Presentation to EMB / Electoral Commission
Conference

24 January 2019

The Role of the ERO

- Compile and maintain a complete and accurate electoral register for their area
 - Registers are published annually (usually 1 December)
 - Registers updated at the start of each month (Jan-Sept)
 - Annual Household Enquiries (July to November)
- Maintain absent voter records i.e. who can vote by post or by proxy.

EROs in Scotland

- 15 EROs for 32 local authority areas
- Independent and answerable to courts
- Personal duty and responsibility
- Funded by local authorities
- SAA represents all Scottish EROs
- Electoral Commission – performance monitoring & non-statutory guidance
- Electoral Management Board – coordination and directions

Registration www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



[Home](#) > [Citizenship and living in the UK](#) > [Voting](#)

Register to vote

Use this service to apply to register to vote or to:

- update your name, address or other details on the electoral register
- change your voting preferences, for example to vote in person or by post
- change whether you're on the [open register](#)

It usually takes about 5 minutes.

This service is also available [in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

You may need the following, if you have them:

- your National Insurance number
- your passport if you're a British citizen living abroad

You need to be on the electoral register to vote in elections and referendums.

[Start now >](#)

Voting

[The electoral register and the 'open register'](#)

[Ways of voting](#)

[More](#)



Absent vote records

- Name
- Registered address
- Date of birth
- Signature (unless waived)
- Type of absent vote
 - Postal to registered address
 - Postal to other address
 - Proxy at polling station
 - Proxy by post
 - Emergency proxy –
disability/occupation/service/employment

Other matters

- Anonymous registration
- Declarations of local connection
- Armed services voters
- Overseas electors
- Absent voting without a signature check

ERO's Role at Elections

- Good liaison with Returning Officers and their Teams
- Advance Indicator of Elector Engagement
- Produces Data Files for Poll Card/Postal Vote Issues
- Three Updates to the Register ahead of an Election
- Produces ballot box Registers for Polling Stations

ERO's Role at Elections

- Determines if an Elector should be granted an Emergency Proxy
- On Polling Day support for Polling Station Teams in identifying electors on Register
- Determining Clerical Errors
- Register is definitive as to who can vote.

Contact Details



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The Electoral Commission

Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral
Commission, Scotland
24 January 2019



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About the Electoral Commission

Background to Commission

- Established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act (PPERA) 2000.
- We are an independent body set up initially by the UK Parliament.
- We also report to the Scottish Parliament.
- Our strategy, goals and priorities are set by our Commission Board and reflected in our Corporate Plan.
- We have offices in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

Our goals....

The
Electoral
Commission



Electoral Commission:

Our corporate goals

- To enable the continued delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible.
- To ensure an increasingly trusted and transparent system of regulation in political finance, overseeing compliance, promoting understanding amongst those regulated and proactively pursuing breaches.
- To be an independent and respected centre of expertise, using knowledge and insight to further the transparency, fairness and efficiency of our democratic system, and help adapt it to the modern, digital age.
- To provide value for money.

What do we do?

Elections and referendums



What do we do?

Delivering free and fair elections and referendums

- We review and report on administration of elections and referendums etc.
- Carry out reviews and report to Ministers on electoral and political matters.
- We have a right to be consulted on proposed changes to electoral law.
- Provide advice and assistance on any matter in which the Commission have skills and experience.
- Right to attend proceedings at elections and referendums and to observe the working practices of ROs, EROs, COs.

What do we do?

Delivering free and fair elections and referendums

- We provide a range of guidance to stakeholders including ROs, EROs, COs, political parties, candidates and agents, police and others.
- Operate the Electoral Observers scheme.
- Set performance standards for ROs and EROs and monitor compliance.
- Share good practice.
- We provide policy development grants to political parties for manifesto development.
- We promote public awareness of current electoral systems in the United Kingdom.

What do we do?

UK [PPERA]
referendums

Depends on the
event specific
legislation but...

- Commission has a duty to comment on a proposed referendum question
- Chair of the Commission is Chief Counting Officer or nominee, responsible for running the referendum and announcing the result
- Rules on income and campaign spending, similar to those for elections
- Guidance to COs and campaigners
- Commission has public awareness role, as for elections
- EMB Convener is RCO
- Returning Officers become Counting Officers
- EROs provide the register of electors

What do we do?

Other potential referendums

- Depends on the legislative
- Edinburgh Agreement of 2012
- Legislation in the Scottish Parliament
- Roles varied from PPERA based referendum to reflect Scottish electoral landscape:
 - Convener of the EMB was CCO
 - Counting Officers no guidance role
- Question assessment
- Regulation of participants
- Public awareness

What do we do?

Regulating political finance

The
Electoral
Commission



Regulating political finance...

Who do we regulate?

- Registered **political parties** in GB and NI. Two registers.
- **Campaigners** in referendums: we register campaigners in a referendum and provide advice and guidance on the rules on spending and donations that campaigners must follow.
- **Non party campaigners**: individuals and organisations that campaign in the run up to elections but do not stand as political parties or candidates.
- **Recall petitions campaigners**: individuals and organisations that campaign for the success or failure of a recall petition.
- **Regulated donees**: we regulate donations and loans to other individuals and organisations e.g. holders of elective office, member associations, members of political parties.

Our Enforcement Policy

The
Electoral
Commission



Enforcement Policy

Aim and objectives

- To ensure that the PPERA rules on party and election finance are complied with, and that people throughout the UK are confident in the integrity and transparency of party and election finance.
- To ensure that there is transparency about party and election finance.
- To ensure that the rules on party and election finance are followed.
- To eliminate any benefit to those we regulate may obtain from failing to comply with the law.
- To bring any organisation or individuals failing to adhere with the law into compliance.
- To deter non compliance

Our Enforcement Approach

Our enforcement approach

- **Regulate** in a way that is effective, proportionate and fair.
- Use **advice and guidance** proactively in order to secure compliance and to give those we regulate a clear understanding of their regulatory requirements.
- Undertake **supervisory** work to ensure that regulated organisations and individuals meet their legal requirements.
- Take **enforcement action**, including using investigatory powers and sanctions, where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to meet our enforcement aims and objectives.
- Take the **facts** of each situation into account.



Andy O'Neill

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POLICE
SCOTLAND

POILEAS ALBA

Are You Ready For The Next Election?

Superintendent Pat O'Callaghan

Operational Support Division

Command Structure

Gold Commander
ACC Mark Williams

Silver Commander
Superintendent Pat O'Callaghan

Bronze Commanders – Divisional Single Points of Contact

A Division
Inspector

G Division
Sergeant

N Division
Inspector

E Division
Inspector

C Division
Inspector

J Division
Chief
Inspector

P Division
Inspector

G Division
Inspector

K Division
Inspector

L Division
Inspector

U Division
Inspector

Q Division
Inspector

V Division
Inspector



Terrorism Threat Level

- The threat to the UK from International Terrorism remains at **SEVERE** – an attack is highly likely
- The UK National Threat Level, and the threat level to Police Services, Defence Personnel, Jewish and Israeli Interests, is currently **SEVERE**



Police Scotland Gold Strategy

- Work with the Electoral Commission and Electoral Management Board for Scotland to ensure that Elections are conducted in a fair and inclusive manner and in accordance with the law
- Minimise the risk of disruption and facilitate peaceful voting
- Minimise the risk of electoral malpractice and secure evidence to prosecute those who engage in electoral malpractice
- Maximise public confidence in the integrity of the election management through a robust internal and external communications strategy
- For the duration of the election period maximise the use of on duty resources through effective and efficient planning
- Ensure the internal Police command structure is fit for purpose to meet the demands of the operation



Responsibilities of Police Scotland SPOCs

- Early contact with Returning Officers, provide policing advice and information they may have in relation to electoral regions
- Identify where their polling places are
- Identify locations that have historically had incidents or currently show potential for being at risk
- Identify sufficient police resources to police polling stations
- Ensure that all officers under their command are aware of the guidance available to them and are versed on their role
- Share information and intelligence
- SPOCs should ensure they are aware of risk factors in their region
- Understand their local community profile



Liaising with Returning Officers

SPOCs will discuss the following with returning officers prior to an election or referendum

- Identify named & alternative contacts at local authority for elections/referendums
- Confirm cover for any planned annual leave periods
- Exchange contact details for all staff including out of hours & backups
- Identify locations that have historically had incidents or currently show potentially for being at risk
- Security of ballot boxes overnight
 - How transported
 - Where to be stored
 - Responsible person and contact details at the polling place and during the count



Guidance on Preventing & Detecting Electoral Fraud

All officers of Police Scotland have access to;

- Guidance on preventing and detecting electoral malpractice
- Pocket guide guidance on policing elections & referendums
- Event Room Support
- Senior officer guidance



Responding to Allegations of Electoral Malpractice

- Electoral Staff should ensure suspicions can be substantiated and someone is prepared to make a statement in writing, then report immediately to SPOC
- Allegations can be competently reported by voters, electors, candidates, registered campaigners, the media or anyone else
- Divisional SPOC – notifies event room on all occasions



Action to be taken by Police Scotland in the Event of an Electoral Offence

- Preserve evidence
- Respect secrecy of sealed documents and seek advice before opening
- Ensure all appropriate parties are notified
- When election/referendum documents become evidence in a potential crime the method of preservation by the police should include consultation with all appropriate parties
- Consider the powers available to them to identify persons and obtain evidence
- Seek advice from a senior officer, Police Scotland Economic Crime Unit or COPFS



Contacts

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Questions and Panel Discussion



ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

Session 2: Your Role as Returning Officer

Malcolm Burr

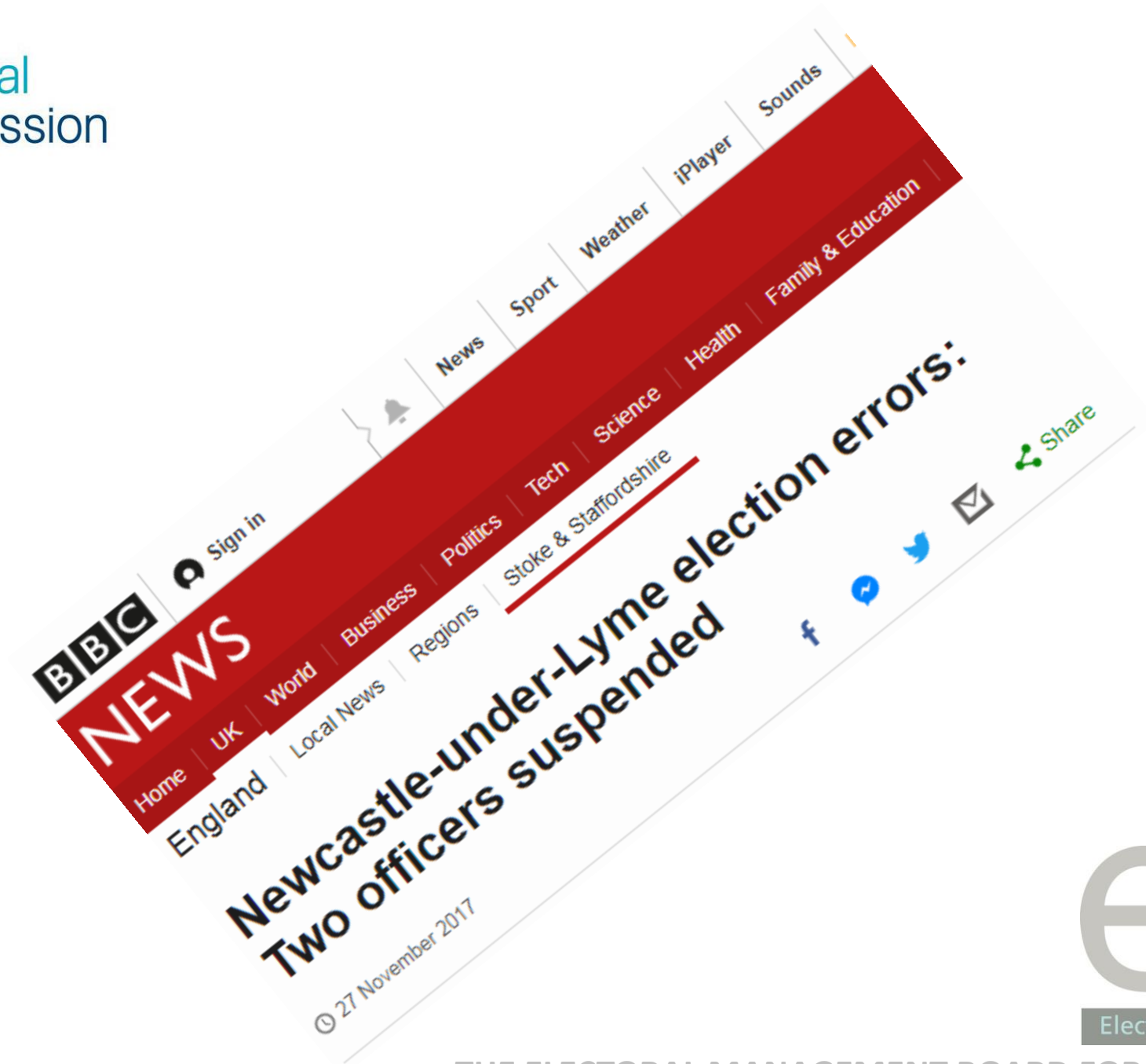
***Returning Officer for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Convener of the EMB***

Glasgow City Chambers, 24 January 2019

Outline: what is the work of the RO? ?

- **Duties** of the Returning Officer
- **Separation** of the Returning Officer role from other duties
- **Accountability**

Elections don't further your career...but they can do a great deal of damage to it!



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Chief executive quits council by 'mutual consent' - 10 months after being suspended following election shambles

John Sellgrenn was suspended in November last year after a report into an election shambles

BBC NEWS Home UK World England Local News

Newcastle - Two officers

© 27 November 2017

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Elections Scotland

The Duties of the Returning Officer

- **Sole legal responsibility** for running election – fundamental democratic function
- Ensures that the election is administered efficiently, **in accordance with the rules**, to deliver a result which will be accepted as accurate and in which all can have confidence
 - Complex range of tasks
 - Multiple concurrent workstreams
 - Strict timetable, that cannot be flexed
 - Limited budget
 - High profile

It all starts with the Council

- Every Council must appoint an officer of the Council to be the RO for elections of councillors
 - RO for a UK Parliamentary Election in Scotland is the same person who has been appointed RO for the election of councillors in the local authority in which the constituency is situated.
 - Scottish Parliament Elections the local government RO also acts as Constituency RO
- 8 ROs also have roles as Regional Returning Officer (RRO) for Scottish (and European...?)Parliament Elections



You are a Project Manager...

- A complex and demanding work programme
 - High profile – media and politicians
 - Time critical tasks
 - Quasi-Judicial Decisions – e.g. validity of nominations, adjudication of ballot papers
 - Familiarity with legislation
 - Communications
- Session 3 will cover in detail
- You can delegate responsibility for tasks, e.g. to a printer, but the accountability is personal

...but you are not Chief Executive

- Legal separation of duties
 - Independence of the RO demands that the role is separate from that of the Chief Executive;

Section 27(1) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983, has the effect of making the office of RO totally distinct from the office by virtue of which an individual has become Returning Officer

- For free and fair electoral events the RO **cannot** be accountable for electoral duties to those whose election s/he administers

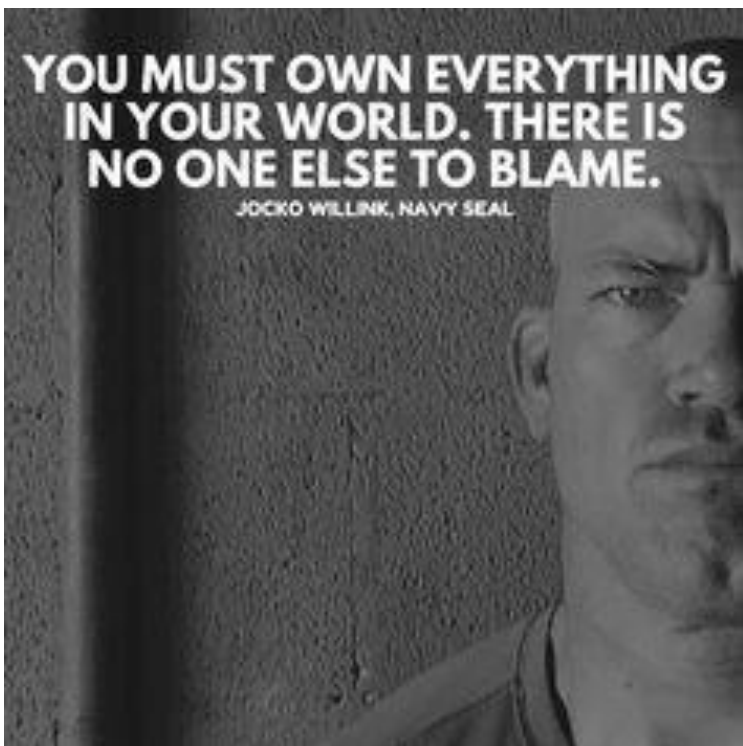
Personally accountable....to?

- The RO is not responsible to the Council but is **directly accountable to the courts** as an independent statutory office holder
- **Personal liability** for the conduct of the election
 - RO must ensure that **as an individual** they are appropriately insured.
- Any claim is against the **RO personally**, not against the Council;
- Election **Petitions** name the RO personally, even where conduct of the election is not questioned;
- Must be able to show evidence of robust planning

Resources of the Council

- Access to the resources, staff and infrastructure of the Council to be used in the delivery of the election.
 - Not as a consequence of the RO being Chief Executive
 - **Councils must make available** to the RO the necessary resources to enable the RO to discharge their functions.
- RO is not bound by Council's normal procedures in terms of conducting the election, e.g. with respect to employment
- RO is **not** subject to direction or instruction from members of the Council

You own the process....



- Ultimately it is **ALL** your responsibility!
 - RO is the Leader, but that means there must be a Team
 - RO does not have to do each task on the project plan
- BUT**
- RO must make sure they are done
 - RO is **accountable** if there are failures
-
- *Delivering a sound election will not make your career as a Chief Executive, but a poor election could damage or even end it*

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Elections Scotland

Questions?

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

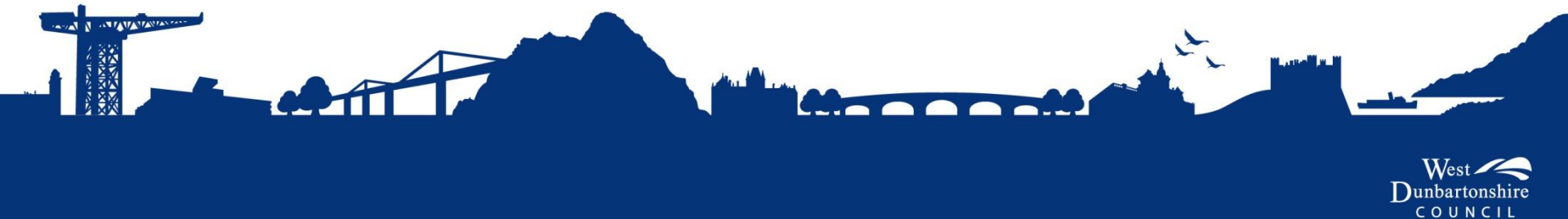
Session 3: The Practicalities of Running an Election

**Joyce White, Returning Officer
Peter Hessett, Depute Returning Officer
George Hawthorn, Election Manager
West Dunbartonshire Council**



A Returning Officer's Perspective

- Some tips from experience
- How I oversee elections as RO
- Balance between strategic oversight and operational delivery - how I achieve it in West Dunbartonshire



Planning

- RO Overview and Control
- Identify team and allocate general responsibilities
- Agree Project Plan well in advance : e.g. October /November for May election
- Review lessons learned from last election/referendum and also previous similar election type
- Review Election rules, Guidance and any Directions/Recommendations from EMB
 - Aware of Electoral Commission Performance Standards
- Incorporate Election timetable as per relevant legislation
- Hold regular meetings to keep plan under review (live document)
- Update Risk and Integrity Plans
- MS Project or similar tools available
 - Electoral Commission templates and guidance, e.g. for Project Plan and Risk Register



Nominations

- Candidates/agents briefings: before, after or both as appropriate
- Prepare Public Notices and Nomination Packs well in advance
 - Electoral Commission templates
 - Forms Group
- Obtain copy of unedited register from ERO, if required
- Two members of senior staff to check Nomination Papers
- Appointment process to take nominations
- Prepare Nomination Checklist for receiving papers
- Offer pre-check of Nomination Papers
- Process in place to accept deposits, if required



Printing: Poll Cards, Ballot Papers and Postal Vote materials

- Have contracts in place
- Supplier contact information held on dependency lists – update as needed
- Expectations and timetable agreed with printer well in advance – involve ERO, they supply data to printer via RO
 - one piece mailer option to reduce mismatches?
- Allow time for proof-reading of key documents – double check **everything**, especially second or third proofs
- On-site inspection of live printed materials – include in contract
 - Electoral Commission expectation
- Make sure there is provision for extraction of postal votes which have been cancelled before issue
- Always check your ballot papers once printed



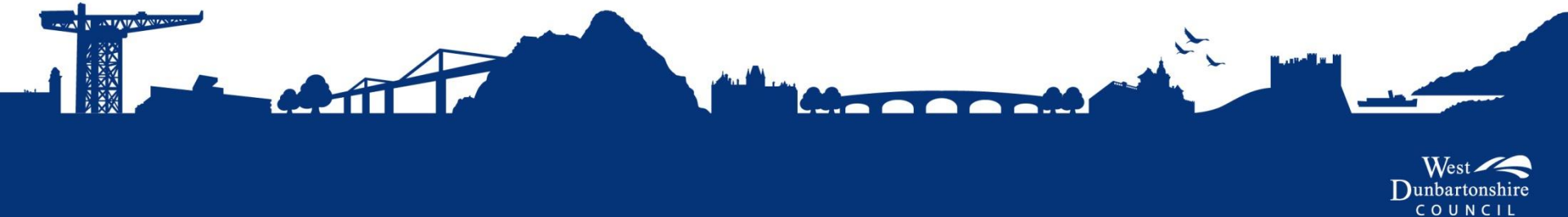
The Poll

- Regular review of Polling Scheme (ideally in time for ERO to include in 1 December publication)
- Regular Meetings with ERO
- Ensure **all** polling places are physically accessible to all voters
 - Not just mobility, also e.g. sight loss and learning difficulties
- Early communication with venues to ensure availability – especially private venues
- Update list of contingency venues
- Early recruitment of staff
 - maintain database subject to **GDPR** requirements



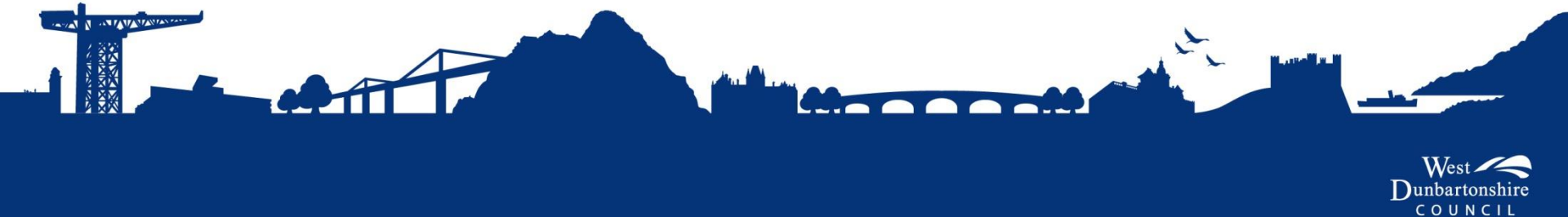
The Poll (Part 2)

- **All** polling staff to be trained in advance of poll
- Standby lists of Polling Clerks and Presiding Officers
- Portacabins and ramps - up and running day before election
- Agree arrangements with ERO for corrections and emergency proxies



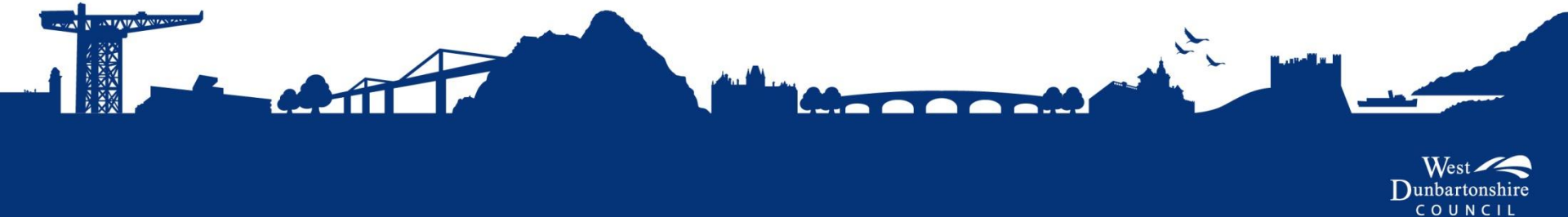
Postal Voting

- Make sure your postal vote software for checking Personal Identifiers (PIs) is up to date and operational
- Upload data early to enable pre-checks of PIs prior to opening sessions
- Select and train staff for opening sessions
- Prepare timetable of opening sessions and include in candidates' packs
- Choose central venue which is accessible
- Dedicated IT Support available
- Senior staff on-hand to deal with candidates/agents



Polling Day

- Early inspection by team of experienced staff
- Experienced staff on hand in election office to field calls and respond quickly to issues e.g. vandalism, power cuts etc.
 - List of handy telephone numbers available
 - Rota of staff in election office to cover phones right up to 10 p.m.
- ERO to provide staff cover from 7 am to 10 pm



Count and Verification of Votes

- Identify location for the count, conduct site visit
 - Contingency venue?
- Consider layout of count centre, access points for ballot boxes, security, etc.
- Signage and information in the count centre
- Involve Police SPOC and Centre Manager in planning of event
- Consider count model – e.g. mini-count
- Recruit and train staff
- Agree process for dealing with doubtful papers
- Prepare Count Plan for all senior staff involved
- Prepare a summary of the Count Plan for agents/candidates.
- Brief candidates/agents on what to expect at count – offer a site visit.
- Consider arrangements for hospitality



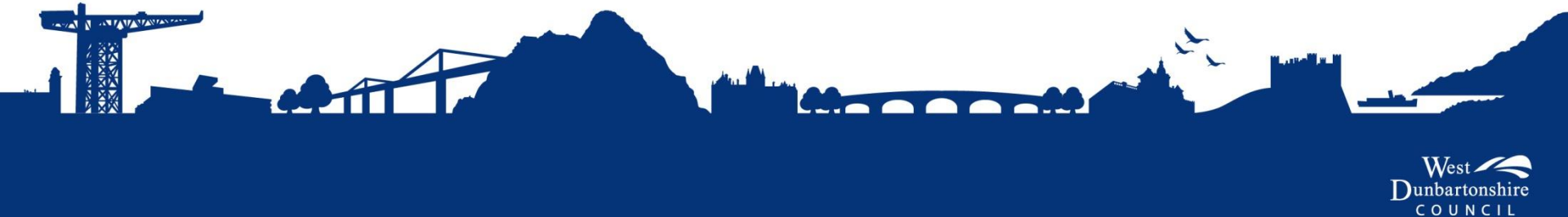
Post-Election Activities

- Ensure that all essential paperwork to be retained is collected in an orderly manner after the Count concludes
- Return writ or notify relevant persons of results – varies
- Arrangements in place to return deposits, if applicable
- Arrangements in place to pay all staff
- Arrangements in place to deal with candidates' expenses
- Organise and retain key documents – checklist from Electoral Commission
- Preparation of accounts (claim) once all invoices and staff have been paid



Lessons Learned

- **Debrief**
 - What went well?
 - What can we improve for next time?
- As required by Electoral Commission Performance Standards



QUESTIONS?



ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

Session 4: Table Top Exercises

Planning For The Known Being Prepared For The Unknown

Glasgow City Chambers, 24 January 2019

Table Top Exercises

- Grouped by Scottish Parliament Region (roughly) including ROs, RRO and EROs
 - Facilitators will prompt discussion
- **Exercise 1** – Planning for May 2021 (20 minutes)
- **Exercise 2** – Ready for an unscheduled event (20 minutes)
 - Handouts, flip charts
 - Choose an RO from your table to report back
 - 3 key points for each exercise
- Feedback / Discussion (20 minutes total)

Feedback



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***ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT
ELECTION?***

**Session 5: The EMB's Returning Officer
Mentoring Scheme**

Malcolm Burr

***Returning Officer for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Convener of the EMB***

The Background

- Significant turnover of Returning Officers in the last year or so
- Many new ROs
 - Several with **no previous experience** of electoral administration
 - A few with limited experience of local authority context
- Returning Officer role is unique
 - As discussed earlier
 - Personally and individually accountable to the courts
 - In an election petition it is the **RO** who is the respondent, not the Council
- RO needs to manage and drive the whole project

Range of support available

- Already discussed
 - Electoral Commission Guidance and Advice
 - EMB seminars, training, website
 - EMB Directions / Recommendations
 - Legal advice within councils
 - Parker's and Schofield's
- Opportunity for more focussed, expert, sympathetic peer support



EMB RO Mentoring Scheme

- A structured grouping of Returning Officers to give mutual support and advice
- Built around Scottish Parliament Regions
 - Mix of expertise, geography, scale etc
 - Often shared ERO
- Escalation route to the Convener - an experienced Returning Officer
- **Formal** Schedule of meetings – which could be “virtual”
- Consistent agenda of issues to discuss
 - Reference to the RO Performance Standards
- **Informal** contact at any time , 1:1

Peer support

- Sometimes only another RO can understand the issues
 - Peer RO can offer perspective
 - Highlight the important elements to focus on
 - Offer ideas and solutions
- There are no really new problems
 - experience will have seen it all before

*Ecclesiastes 1:9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; **there is nothing new under the sun.***

Schedule of Meetings & Agenda



- Mentor Groups to “meet” every 3 months
 - Formal meetings or virtual updates
 - Documented
- Informal discussions as needed RO to RO
- Template agenda built around Performance Standards
- Basic checklists to aid planning

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RO Mentor Group	Central Scotland & Glasgow	Highlands and Islands	Lothian	Mid Scotland and Fife	North East Scotland	South of Scotland	West of Scotland
Lead RO?	Glasgow	Na h-Eileanan Siar	Edinburgh	Fife	Dundee	East Ayrshire	West Dunbartonshire
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk North Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire Glasgow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute Highland Moray Na h-Eileanan Siar Orkney Islands Shetland Islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Edinburgh East Lothian Midlothian West Lothian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clacks Fife Perth and Kinross Stirling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Angus Dundee City Moray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dumfries and Galloway East Ayrshire Scottish Borders South Ayrshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Dunbartonshire East Renfrewshire Inverclyde North Ayrshire Renfrewshire West Dunbartonshire

“...to deliver a result that will be trusted as accurate”

The Agenda	Project Governance	Performance standard 1: Voters Ensuring that planning for and delivery of the poll enables voters to vote easily and know that their vote will be counted in the way they intended					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Plan Status Reports Project Board Risk Register Lessons Learned Liaison with Police SPOC Contingency Plans Checking and Verification throughout 	Performance standard 2: Those who want to stand for election Ensuring that planning for and delivery of the poll enables people who want to stand for election to find out how to get involved, what the rules are, and what they have to do to comply with these rules, and enables them to have confidence in the management of the process and the result					
		Who can vote?	Who do they vote for?	How do they vote?	How did they vote?		
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with ERO – when did you last meet? Checking the registers etc Contact Centre Public Awareness activity Poll Cards – print and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Election Notices Forms Planning / Checking Nominations Briefing Sessions Printing Ballot Papers – quality and accuracy Comms and media 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Polling Place-availability Polling Place preparation Number of stations Logistics – box transport Postal Vote printing PV verification Staffing of Polling Training Polling Staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Count Venue Count Staffing Count Process PA & Information in Count Centre Security Media Police 		

Other Training Opportunities

- **Become a registered Electoral Observer**
 - New approach from the Electoral Commission
- **Shadowing** at English elections in May 2019
 - Spend the day with an RO at polling and count
 - Electoral Commission will arrange
- **Shadowing** at any Scottish Council by-elections
 - Especially useful if you are new to polling and count
 - Opportunities to see manual count for STV
- Specific Training seminars as requested by ROs
 - Signature verification (Forensic science)
 - Risk Management
 - Contingency Planning
 - Security (ICT and personal security)

Mentoring Scheme

- Further details in the next month
- **EMB website**
- Template documents
 - Checklists
 - Agenda



ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT ELECTION?

Session 6: Next Steps

Sue Bruce
Electoral Commissioner, Scotland

Review of the day

Do you now:

- Understand the policy, legal and regulatory framework within which elections in Scotland are held;
- Be aware of the range of stakeholders involved in elections in Scotland;
- Understand your specific legal duties and **personal** accountability as a Returning Officer; and
- Have an awareness of your role in providing **strategic oversight** of the delivery of elections.



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Review of the day

- Understand the range of **practical steps** that have to be taken to deliver a successful election;
- Know the sources of support and guidance available to you;
- Understand the importance of a **state of readiness** for unscheduled polls; and
- Understand what you should do in the next days and weeks to prepare for what you know is coming **AND** be ready for what might come!

What will you do tomorrow?

- How do you apply the lessons of today?
- It is your (**personal**) responsibility to be prepared
- Are you ready? What more needs to be in place?



Example questions you might want to ask

RO Checklist	
Does this Council have sufficient experienced officers to plan and deliver the election, with accommodation and ICT resource?	✓
Do we have a documented project plan ? Have we learned from the last event?	
Do we have the right supplier contracts in place? (printer, postal votes etc)	
Are polling place contacts up to date?	
Do we have a count venue?	
Is our database of polling/count staff up to date? (GDPR?)	
Do we have accommodation for box filling?	
What are our logistics arrangements for getting boxes to polling places and then to the count?	
What are our Comms and Media plans?	
Do we know who our Police SPOC is?	
Who are the DROs?	
When did we last meet with the ERO?	

Questions and Answers

Panel

Maria McCann - Head of Elections, Scottish Government

Malcolm Burr – Convener of the EMB

Chris Highcock – Secretary of the EMB

Pete Wildman – Chair of the Electoral Registration Committee of the
Scottish Assessors Association (SAA)

Andy O'Neill – Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland

Feedback Sheets

- Please help us by completing your feedback sheets and handing them in before you leave

