



ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

REPORT

e-Counting Project 2017 – Update as at April 2015

MEETING

14 April 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the latest update on the current status of the preparatory work which is underway in relation to the next local government elections which are expected to be held on 4 May 2017.

CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME

2. The Board will be aware from the email from Louise Unwin dated 18 March 2015 of the decision to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to seek information from industry and the market place on the implications for their systems of introducing an element of rotation to the ballot paper, and therefore departing from the traditional alphabetical candidate order approach.

Response - The deadline for responses was 11 March 2015 and responses were received from the undernoted six companies:

- CGI
- Idox
- Indra
- IntElect
- Scytl
- Smartmatic

Meetings with industry – each of the respondents was offered the opportunity to present their approach to the potential introduction of rotation in person with the e-Counting Project Team at Pentland House. This location was chosen in view of both availability of meeting space over a two day period, and to allow respondents an opportunity to view the space which will eventually be utilised as a test centre post the award of contract. Five of the companies attended in person, with Scytl attending via video conference. Each of the respondents was invited to describe how they would address the challenge of candidate rotation, followed by with a question and answer session.

Respondents have potential solutions in varying states of readiness, and all highlighted increased risks and costs associated with the introduction of rotation. No supplier will be disadvantaged by not submitting a response to the RFI.

Consultation – In parallel with the RFI a number of meetings have been arranged with, and written responses received from, a range of relevant stakeholders, academics, and other parties.

Stakeholders and others consulted include: the Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel, the Convener and Secretary of the Electoral Management Board, SOLAR, COSLA, Electoral Commission, Glasgow City Council, Electoral Reform Society, Enable Scotland, Learning Disability Alliance Scotland, RNIB, Professor John Curtice, Strathclyde University, Dr Alastair Clark, University of Newcastle, Dr Malcolm Harvey of the University of Aberdeen, Professor Hugh Bochel, University of Lincoln, and Dr Jan Eichhorn, University of Edinburgh.

Next Steps – Following the information gathering process, an advice paper has now been submitted to the Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment. In addition, a meeting has been arranged between the Minister and Mary Pitcaithly in her capacity as Convener of the EMB. Subject to the timing of further consideration and subsequent decision by the Minister, it is hoped that an advertisement can be placed in the OJEU and an Invitation to Tender issued around the end of April 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

3. The Board is invited to note the current status of preparatory work to procure an e-counting solution for the 2017 local government elections.

D McGregor,

Edinburgh,

8 April 2015