



ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

REPORT e-Counting Project 2017 – Update as at November 2016

MEETING 25 November 2016

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the latest update on the current status of the preparatory work which is underway in relation to the e-Counting Project 2017.

COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTATION

2. All Returning Officers have now returned a signed copy of the Buyer's Guide to the Scottish Government. It is also encouraging to note that all authorities signed their Services Agreement with CGI on or by the deadline of 18 November 2016.

NEW SOFTWARE AT BY-ELECTIONS

3. The updated version of the e-counting software which will be utilised next May has now been successfully deployed in by-elections in Glasgow, and Aberdeenshire (two wards). In each case the adjudication rates have been very encouraging. There are four further by-elections; 2 in Angus and one in both Fife and East Ayrshire between November and January 2017.

TRAINING

4. Role-based training is to be made available to all council staff who will be taking part in the election counts on 5 May 2017. This will take place in February and March 2017. Most of the training will take place at Pentland House in Edinburgh. However, for the convenience of the more northerly councils, one week's training will be carried out in Aberdeen. Initial scheduling for six authorities attending the Aberdeen event was completed last month and firm dates have now been allocated to the twelve authorities who will be using the smaller count centre within Pentland House from 27 February 2017. Information is still awaited from a few of the 13 authorities who will be using the larger count centre and this is preventing the scheduling from being completed. Three of the largest authorities require two dates to train their staff

compliment and it is proving challenging to match count centre capacity with the dates that authorities are available.

5. Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar have indicated that they will not require to attend the training sessions as all staff will receive on-site training for the forthcoming Crofting Commission election on 17 March 2017.
6. Work is well underway to review the draft content of the detailed Training Manual which will be made available to each of the c1,300 staff who will be attending the training events.

DATA COLLECTION AND DRAFT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (PMF)

7. Draft copies of Data Collection Returns covering Nomination data and a comprehensive suite of Results information, together with national summaries have been shared with the Electoral Commission. In addition, draft copies of two PMF Returns to be submitted in mid-February and mid-April respectively have also been submitted to the Commission. Final copies of these documents will be issued before Christmas and will be covered at the “Preparing for the Scottish Local Government elections 2017” event being held within the City Chambers, Glasgow on Thursday 12 January 2017.

PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS & POSTAL VOTING PACKS

8. At their meeting on 4 October, the Project Board approved the establishment of a working group to capture all known printing issues and to act as a forum for ensuring that these issues are addressed and that this work is communicated to the electoral community. The first meeting of the Working Group was held in Glasgow on 9 November with representatives of Angus, Clackmannanshire, Glasgow, Perth & Kinross and Scottish Borders in attendance. These authorities represent all the major companies involved in the production of elections print. It is proposed that this group will make recommendations on detailed printing issues to the EMB. The Working Group will next meet on 8 December.
9. In addition, on 16 November, CGI’s print partner for this project, Idox, was invited to present their approach to printing using their EasyPrint portal to authorities who are not currently Idox customers. This event was well attended and feedback very positive. The slideshow presentation used at this event will shortly be made available to all ROs and Election Managers on the Online Portal.

OTHER MATTERS

10. The Board is invited to note the position in relation to a number of other elements of the project:

- Online Portal – Login details etc for the new Portal have now been issued to authorities, although some of the content has still to be reviewed by the Project Team
- Gateway Review – the latest independent assurance ‘Gateway’ review was carried out between 1 and 3 November. Thanks to those EMB members who were kind enough to take part. Although the review report has yet to be circulated to the e-counting Project Board, we understand that it is a very positive report.

RECOMMENDATION

11. The Board is invited to:

- Note the current status of the key tasks within the e-Counting Project 2017.

D McGregor,

Edinburgh,

22 November 2016