

## ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: Thursday 25 January 2018 2.00pm

Chief Executive's Board Room

Waverley Court, East Market Street

Edinburgh EH8 8BG

**Present:**

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Pete Wildman (PW ERO/SAA Rep), David Martin (DM RO), Andrew Kerr (AK RO), Malcolm Burr (MB RO)
- **Advisers:** Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep), David Miller (DMi DRO/AEA Rep) (via phone), Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board/DRO), Fran Cattanach (FC Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION
1.0/2.0	Admin/Note of Previous Meeting/Matters arising etc.	<b>Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Milton (IM ERO/SAA Rep)</li> <li>• Elma Murray (EM RO)</li> <li>• Kate Crawford (KC ERO/SAA Rep)</li> <li>• Jim Savege (JS RO)</li> </ul> <b>Note of Previous Meeting (2 November 2017) &amp; Matters Arising</b> The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	

<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Electoral Commission Update</b></p>	<p>AON told Board that Mette Christensen (MC) has a new role within the Electoral Commission, therefore, the role is currently being advertised on the EC website. MP asked AON to pass on the best wishes of the EMB to MC.</p> <p>On the 26 January 2018, the EC will hold a seminar with the Stevenson’s Trust (part of Glasgow University) about the future of elections in Scotland. This will then feed into the Scottish Government’s Electoral Reform consultation. Speakers will include Joe Fitzpatrick MSP, Professor John Curtice and various academics (agenda circulated).</p> <p>Regarding the Modernising Guidance project, Dr. Sweetenham has met various stakeholders and is working on the recommendations based on her findings. <b>ACTION:</b> CH to invite Dr. Sweetenham to the next EMB meeting to update on the project.</p> <p>AON stated that there are currently Voter ID pilots ongoing in England as well as Postal Vote security pilots. The Electoral Commission has published its Local Government Elections Report which is currently being scrutinised by the Local Government Committee.</p>	<p><b>CH</b></p>
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<b>4.0</b>	<b>Scottish Government Update</b>	<p>MMc informed the Group that the Scottish Government's Consultation on Electoral Reform was underway with a closing date of the 12 March 2018.</p> <p>MMc advised that Joe Fitzpatrick MSP is looking forward to the seminar the following day especially as the Scottish Government is looking for wider community engagement and they are also looking to involve more young people in the Consultation on Electoral Reform. Over 300 responses have been received so far. DMcG will be assisting the Scottish Government with out and about engagement.</p> <p>There was a broad discussion about the proposed response from the EMB to the consultation questions. <b>ACTION:</b> CH to amend draft response and circulate for further comment.</p>	<b>CH</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Scotland Office/Cabinet Office Update</b>	<p>Update received before the meeting which included that following the UK Government Ministerial re-shuffle, <a href="#">Chloe Smith</a> has been appointed as Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, with the constitution and democracy as part of her responsibilities. Cabinet Office officials have been briefing her about the modernising registration agenda.</p> <p>The UK Government published its <a href="#">Democratic Engagement Plan</a> in December 2017. This sets out the work for modernising registration and promoting democratic engagement going forward.</p> <p>CH reported that there are ongoing issues for Local Authorities regarding their claims for the UKPGE 2017. It was agreed that dealing with the Claims Unit was often a negative experience for those concerned due to a lack of appreciation of the practical issues of election delivery.</p>	

6.0	<b>Electoral Registration Update</b>	PW reported that the canvas was completed on time with submission rates similar to those from previous years. It was noted that end of year statistics were not ready on time from some EMS system suppliers so EROs were not in a position to pass figures onto the Electoral Commission yet.	
7.0	<b>Joint EMB/Police Scotland Seminar</b>	The 'Moving to Critical' seminar took place at Tulliallan Police College on 28 November 2017 and was very well received with very positive feedback. Next steps will be to produce some guidance to be circulated. CH reported that there has been an invite to the UK Police Conference on 9 Feb in Birmingham to highlight the benefits of the seminar. <b>ACTION:</b> CH to produce a 'best practice' document for displaying on the Electoral Commission website.	<b>CH</b>
8.0	<b>EMB Financial Statement</b>	EMB financial statement reviewed briefly and an over-spend on the e-counting project noted.	
9.0	<b>EMB Annual Report</b>	CH informed the Board that the Annual Report has been laid before Parliament (copies circulated). CH highlighted the section on the EMB's future work programme in the report.	
10.0	<b>Electoral Summit with the Minister for the Constitution</b>	A Summit was held in London on 11 December covering the challenges of democratic engagements. PW and CH attended which focussed mainly on registration issues.  PW is sitting on the National Democracy Week Planning Group (due to take place 2-8 July 2018). PW reported that there is an expectation that every local authority will carry out something that week. There is also a desire to publish an Atlas of Democratic Variation (online interactive map) but success will be dependent on the quality of the data used. <b>ACTION:</b> EMB to write to Cabinet Office to comment on the scheduled dates of Democracy Week given that majority of Scottish schools will be on summer holidays.	<b>EMB</b>

11.0	<b>Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings</b>	The last ERRWG meeting took place on 11 January 2018.	
12.0	<b>Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel</b>	The last SPPPP meeting took place on 12 December 2017.	
13.0	<b>AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the announcement of MP's retirement, MMc informed the Board that the Scottish Government will arrange a successor and will report back in due course. MMc conveyed her personal thanks to MP for her on-going support.</li> <li>• On behalf of the EMB, MP thanked EMB Administrator FC for the last two years and wished FC well in returning to her substantive post as her secondment ends.</li> </ul>	
14.0	<b>Date of Next Meeting(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>26 March 2018 (rescheduled from 29 March)</b></li> <li>• <b>22 May 2018 (rescheduled from 24 May)</b></li> <li>• <b>27 September 2018</b></li> <li>• <b>29 November 2018 (to be rescheduled when new Convener in post)</b></li> </ul>	