

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: Friday 28 October 2016, 2pm

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), Malcolm Burr (MB RO), Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO), Jim Savege (JS RO) by telephone
- **Advisers:** Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Stuart Matheson (SM Scotland Office), Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep), Mette Christensen (MC Electoral Commission), Roddy Angus (RA Scottish Government), David Miller (DM DRO/AEA Rep), Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board/DRO), Fran Cattnach (FC Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION
1.0/ 2.0	Admin/Note of Previous Meeting/Matters arising etc	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Kerr (AK RO) • Joan Hewton (JH ERO) • Elma Murray (EM RO) • Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative) • Alex Mowat (AM Scottish Government) • David Martin (DM RO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting (26 August 2016) & Matters Arising The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting with one correction made to item 8.0 (EC will prepare response and share with EMB). MP confirmed that Jim Savege has now joined the Electoral Management Board and Eileen Howat has joined the e-Counting Project Board.</p>	

		<p>CH highlighted that the Scottish Government had confirmed that the Gender Balance on Public Boards Bill will not apply to the EMB.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the fact that in September the EC had published their report on the Scottish Parliament Elections.</p> <p>MMc stressed that SPE2016 claims should be submitted by 7 Nov for review.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Scottish Local Government Elections 2017</p>	<p>Update from Scottish Government</p> <p>Legislation - Only one question at the Scottish Parliament’s Committee Consideration of the Order which was ‘is a GP allowed to charge for a proxy voter request?’ Response was that GPs can charge for this but the position may be reviewed.</p> <p>Legislation will be in place in the next 2 weeks or so.</p> <p>Update from Electoral Commission (EC)</p> <p>MC confirmed that guidance notes for ROs and Candidates & Agents are now published. There is some guidance still under consultation and some to follow. All guidance will be published by early 2017 which is as planned. The EC will meet Police Scotland soon with the EMB for usual briefing.</p> <p>AON described the 2-phase public awareness campaign which is underway (and similar to the one used for SPE2016). Booklet to households will go out w/c 3rd April 2017. There will be a big focus on partnership working. Toolkit for 15-17 year olds will be revised with more emphasis on how to vote and about politics in general.</p>	

		<p>Performance Management</p> <p>Convener’s Directions will impose a Performance Management Framework (PMF). CH stated that templates are currently being worked on with aim of avoiding duplication with EC data collection. Once finalised, templates will be sent to all ROs.</p> <p>Discussion about Form V (formerly Form K) – AON confirmed that the EC does use figures from the form in reports. DM requested notice to be given if Form V is going to be required to be completed. PW agreed from an ERO point of view given registration data involved. ACTION: EROs to discuss further.</p> <p>Registration Update</p> <p>PW gave update on electoral registration issues, including that the publication of the register on the 1 December will be difficult for some EROs due to the boundary review, polling schemes or by-elections. Therefore, some EROs may have to re-publish on the 1 February 2017.</p> <p>There are Cabinet Office pilots underway for modifying the canvas; with two in Scotland going forward from seven applications.</p> <p>Proposed Final Directions from Convener of EMB</p> <p>Directions distributed for discussion following amendments made from consultation period. CH directed Board to revisions made on page 4 of the document. CH acknowledged the amount of work and time that IM, PW and others have carried out on the schedule of dates.</p>	<p>EROs</p>
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<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Electoral Events/ Issues</p>	<p>Local Government Boundary Commission Recommendations – these have been actioned by the Minister for most of the Council areas.</p> <p>UK Parliamentary Boundary Review has been launched. It was noted that proposals are on the basis of old Ward boundaries.</p> <p>Consultation on draft Scottish Independence Referendum Bill Scottish Government welcomes responses before the closing date of 11 Jan 2017. There are no further updates. RA confirmed that there is provision in the Bill to give EROs funding.</p> <p>Consultation on Electoral Reform MMc stated that this will not be launched until after the consultation on the Referendum Bill closes. MMc confirmed that other Scottish Government work will continue as normal. ACTION: MP to reply to MMc’s email stating that the EMB recognises that another consultation is in place.</p> <p>Local Government and Communities Committee Inquiry into Payments to Returning Officers</p> <p>A submission of written evidence has been prepared. RA stated that England is also considering the issue but that there is currently less media attention drawn to it. AON stated that the Electoral Commission has been invited onto the panel. Ailsa Irvine will represent the Commission.</p> <p>Overseas Electors The Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) will prepare a response regarding the UK</p>	<p>MP/CH</p>
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		Government proposals for 'Votes for Life' and share with EMB for consideration.	
5.0	EMB Role and Resources	<p>EMB Financial Statement – noted.</p> <p>MP has received queries from various Council Election Teams with concern about the general issue of staffing and short term resource of staff in current climate.</p> <p>ACTION: MB to create a survey to assess current and future pressures across Scotland (including any pressures that might be faced all year, as well as immediately before an election). Thought to be given as to whether there are tasks which can be carried out centrally rather than 32 times by all the local authorities.</p> <p>ACTION: CH to collate responses and suggest solutions by end of 2016.</p> <p>ACTION: EROs to submit any views on this but will not be included in survey.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>CH EROs</p>
6.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	No updates since last EMB meeting but should have one by next EMB meeting.	
7.0	Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel	<p>Meeting on 27 Sept went well. Panel had found that communication in all count centres was very good at SPE2016. Presentation by Inclusion Scotland who can help potential candidates with physical or mental disabilities to stand in an election. MMc stated that quite a lot of interest has been received so far and the pilot will be an independent evaluation. MMc also raised point about whether Inclusion Scotland has access to sufficient data to target support to potential candidates with disabilities.</p> <p>Party Conferences</p> <p>Board thanked Jim Savege and Stuart Galloway for their attendance at recent party conferences. CH will be attending the Lib Dem conference on 12 Nov in Dunfermline. Representative needed to attend Labour Party conference in Perth on Sat 25 Feb 2017.</p>	

8.0	Electoral Commission/EMB Joint Briefing Event	This event, which is normally well supported by ROs, will take place on 12 January at Glasgow City Chambers. Proposed agenda discussed with suggestions to add topic of 'Adjudication of Doubtful Papers' to the Count session, and to add Performance Management Framework into the 'After the Elections' session.	
9.0	Sir Eric Pickles' Review into Electoral Fraud	It was noted that the Electoral Commission has submitted a response to the Minister for Parliamentary Business after sharing with EMB. MMc confirmed that the Scottish Government has not submitted an official response yet.	
10.0	AOB	MP raised the forthcoming retiral of John McCormick who will be greatly missed and who has shown great support to the EMB. Dame Sue Bruce has been appointed in his place as Electoral Commissioner with responsibility for Scotland.	
11.0	Date of Next Meeting	25 November 2016 <i>(please note a venue change to the Octagon Room, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh)</i>	
12.0	Provisional Dates for 2017	Dates agreed as 27 January, 24 February and 31 March	
Date of future meetings: 25 November 2016, 27 January, 24 February and 31 March			