

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: Tuesday 25 May 2018 11.00am

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), Ian Milton (IM ERO), Kate Crawford (KC ERO/SAA Rep) Elma Murray (EM & RO), Malcolm Burr (MB & RO), Andrew Kerr (AK & RO)
- **Advisers:** Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep), David Miller (DMi DRO/AEA Rep), Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Dougie McGregor (DMcG - e-Counting Local Government Liaison Consultant), Liz Ure (LU Scottish Government)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board/DRO)

		NOTE	ACTION
1.0/2.0	<p>Note of Previous Meeting:</p> <p>26 March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted as an accurate record 	

<p>3.0</p>	<p>Electoral Commission Update</p>	<p><i>Delivering Modern Guidance Project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continuous with workshops involving administrators, EROs and political parties. • Current guidance is good but voluminous and can be hard to navigate. • Aim is to make it more flexible and able to be updated more easily. Moving from pdf style to web based. Also designed for mobiles and tablets, streamlined and with better mapping of topics. • It has been decided to take a web-based approach to presenting guidance. Nothing would be lost in terms of quality or coverage but guidance would be easier to find. • The first guidance in the new format will be ready in 2019 however there will be no “big bang” - it will be published in a phased way. Should any unexpected electoral events occur the project would be paused to enable focus of resources appropriately. <p><i>Report on Voter ID Pilots</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilots currently being evaluated with aim to complete evaluation before recess. No major problems experienced. <p><i>Reports on 2018 polls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polls were well run with few issues identified. 	
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<p>4.0</p>	<p>Scottish Government Update</p>	<p><i>Update on Scottish Government Consultation on Electoral Reform</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At close of consultation over 1000 responses received. These are currently being analysed. • Aim to complete analysis by early July, publication by mid-summer • Proposals for changes in legislation etc likely to come in early autumn with all policy informed by the consultation responses. <p><i>Prisoner Voting – Scottish Parliament Equalities and Human Rights Committee report</i> <i>(Report at this link)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note report from the Committee. • Likely to be additional consultation around proposals, especially with victim support groups • FMQs discussion indication that FM not in favour of blanket enfranchisement • Scottish Government required to respond to committee by 1 July. • Minister will also write to UK Government around steps to address the UK proposals in Scotland. <p><i>eCount preparation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from LU. Lessons form 2017 experience being used to inform preparation for 2022 contract. Governance structures to be reviewed – role of Working Groups etc. • If 2017 timetable to be repeated work needs to start in earnest in mid 2019 with respect to tender etc <p><i>Accessibility Project</i></p>	
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<p>5.0</p>	<p>Scotland Office/Cabinet Office Update</p>	<p><i>Meeting with Cabinet Office re Election Finance 12 June 2018</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims for funds by ROs for UK Parliamentary General Election in June 2017 had been challenged by Claims Unit across a number of areas. • MP had written to Cabinet Office as Convener of EMB to raise concerns around process and the way in which may costs were being deemed invalid. • CH and EMB rep to meet with Cabinet Office – Paul Docker – in Scotland Office on 12 June • MP unable to attend. AK to attend meeting as EMB rep and RO. <p><i>European Parliamentary Elections / Finance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Office have confirmed that UK will cease to be a member of the European Union on 29th March 2019 and we will therefore not be taking part in the European Parliamentary elections in 2019. • Ministers do not consider it is necessary for Returning Officers to make the usual preparations for the conduct of a European Parliamentary poll in 2019. • Because the apportionment payment in relation to capital items that would have arisen in May 2019 cannot now be paid Cabinet Office would allow an apportionment payment for June 2017. • Claims have already been submitted for June 2017 and Cabinet Office are not asking ROs to amend and resubmit their claims. Instead, a short form can be completed to include the capital items not already claimed for. 	
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<p>6.0</p>	<p>Electoral Registration Update from the Electoral Registration Committee of the SAA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW provided update on Registration issues • National Democracy week – from Monday 2 July 2018, the 90th anniversary of the 1928 Equal Franchise Act which gave women the same voting rights as men; range of events planned. To include TV advert featuring EROs and staff • Discussion around promotion of participation in democracy broadly addressing all difficult to reach groups including homeless. • Canvas to start early July. 	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>EMB Work Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Scotland had supplied new list of SPOCs CH had circulated to all ROs. ROs encouraged to make contact and meet even in absence of immediate election. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB and Electoral Commission to meet with Police Scotland to discuss national event to provide briefing to SPOCs to ensure maintenance of their readiness for elections • Discussion around future work programme of the EMB. Resilience of elections infrastructure is key concern given turnover of staff and protracted gap between major electoral events. Risk of loss of capacity and expertise among ROs, DROs and broader teams. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to plan for succession among ROs and DROs • Mentoring of ROs to be investigated. ACTION CH to raise with new Convener 	<p>CH</p>

8.0	EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Commission Resource was noted • AEA Questions and Responses noted • Actions for ROs/EROs – CH had been in discussion with ICO with respect to best approach for ROs with respect to registration with the ICO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that due to introduction of GDPR and associated publicity the ICO had been swamped with work and there was a significant backlog such that applications were only being dealt with slowly. A simplified registration process was about to be introduced and as such it may be easier for ROs to apply under that process. 	
9.0	EMB Financial Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted 	
10.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group / EAB and associated meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No recent meetings. 	
11.0	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p><i>As this was the last meeting for the Convener prior to her retirement the Board recorded its recognition and thanks for the work of Mary Pitcaithly in support of democracy and the service of voters over her career as Returning Officer, member of the interim Electoral Management board for Scotland and original Convener of the EMB. Her work as Chief Counting Officer and general leadership of the electoral community in Scotland has been widely appreciated especially given the professionalism, integrity and personal care with which she performed the various duties.</i></p>	

Dates of Future Meetings

- **27 September 2018**
- **29 November 2018 (to be rescheduled when new Convener in post)**

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