

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: Friday 26 August 2016, 2pm

Chief Executive's Board Room

Waverley Court, East Market Street

Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Present:

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative), Elma Murray (EM RO), David Martin (DM RO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO)
- **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), Alex Mowat (AM Scottish Government), David Miller (DM DRO/AEA Rep)
- **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	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Kerr (AK RO) • Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO) • Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison) • Malcolm Burr (MB RO) • Pete Wildman (PW ERO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting (27 May 2016) & Matters Arising The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting with one correction made to item 5.0 (140,000 ballot papers tested).</p>	

<p>3.0</p>	<p>New Board Members</p>	<p>Following the need to replace Sally Loudon on the EMB Board, and fact that e-Counting Project Board is two members short, MP confirmed that she had received nominations for replacements. ACTION: MP to invite Jim Savege to join EMB Board (Chief Exec Aberdeenshire) and Eileen Howat (Chief Exec South Ayrshire) to join the e-Counting Project Board.</p>	<p>MP</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>EU Referendum 23 June 2016</p>	<p>Feedback from EUR 2016:</p> <p>Electoral Registration – The extension of the registration deadline presented a challenge at the time which pressurised RO, RCO and Registration Officers. IM had an issue with duplicate registrations (increase of 31%).</p> <p>Pre-polling day – preparations appear to have gone smoothly.</p> <p>Postal Voting- Increased number of postal voters. Group agreed that Cabinet Office had not set a precedent by paying for pre-paid envelopes for overseas voters for this electoral event.</p> <p>Integrity Issues – Group gave examples of personation in their areas. ACTION: CH, MP and Police to have meeting to discuss huge interest in personation issues at time which dissipates after event. ACTION: MMc to also pick up at policy end and feedback accordingly.</p> <p>Polling day – appeared that all went well.</p> <p>The Count – Group agreed that little interest overall from permitted participants. DM requested an earlier awareness if submitting Form K data via the Results Collation System.</p> <p>Royal Mail – EM stated that many postal votes were received day after poll (North Ayrshire). Some LA’s had experienced difficulties with Tuesday deliveries.</p>	<p>CH/MP</p> <p>MMc</p>

		<p>Campaigning issues & campaign material – no issues to report except that some imprints had been illegible.</p> <p>Campaign expenditure – returns not due in yet so no comment.</p> <p>Commission guidance – Group agreed that guidance was available in a timely manner.</p> <p>General – Group agreed that EUR 2016 appeared to run very smoothly.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Scottish Local Government Elections 2017</p>	<p>Update from Scottish Government</p> <p>Thanks given to all those involved with the consultation on The Order. A lot of progress has been made and plans are on track. Final legislation will be in place six months in advance and will be similar to previous elections.</p> <p>MMc/RA confirmed that any changes to whether or not home addresses appear on ballot papers would definitely have to go out to consultation before any decisions or changes made. Group agreed that often agents have issue over addresses appearing on ballot papers. There is no intention to make this change for May 2017.</p> <p>Update from Electoral Commission (EC)</p> <p>MC circulated document with proposed products for 2017 polls (Guidance and Resources for Returning Officers and also for Candidates and Agents) and stated that all documents will be published from October on a rolling basis, and in consultation with the EMB. The 2017 public awareness campaign will be based on the previous 2016 campaign with two phases which are Registration and Voter Information. The EC plans to work again with partners like SOLACE in order to engage young people and the #ReadytoVote campaign will be run again.</p>	

		<p>Draft Timetable</p> <p>Thanks to those involved with working on the draft timetable to date. CH confirmed that the Electoral Commission has agreed the proposed dates. It was noted that Easter has an impact on registration as Easter Monday is non dies for electoral management but not for registration. Therefore, registration will close at midnight on Easter Monday (17 April 2017). ACTION: CH to circulate timetable to interested parties ASAP with caveats attached as changes could still be made due to legislation.</p> <p>Draft Directions from EMB Convener</p> <p>Discussion about the proposed Directions which are in common with past few elections. ACTIONS: CH to confirm whether ROs would prefer a third issue of postal votes. CH to confirm whether printer could manage three print runs on 3rd/10th/18th April 2017.</p> <p>It was noted that political parties may not yet be aware of the timing of the Count (i.e. not an overnight count) but that they will be made aware via the Directions when circulated to them. At the request of the Electoral Commission, RA highlighted fact that the Scottish Government will be producing different guidance posters for polling booths. Discussion followed about the need for graphics which can be added as all can be adapted as ROs see fit.</p> <p>Performance Management – CH stressed that this task will not be too onerous for ROs/DROs but is a valuable and useful exercise. AON confirmed that the Electoral Commission will provide resource to support it too.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>CH CH</p>
--	--	---	----------------------------

		<p>E-Counting Update and Data Collection Returns (circulated)</p> <p>AM stated that stage 2 of testing has been completed. Mock Testing in Perth due to start soon with Joe FitzPatrick visiting on 9 Sept. MP had mentioned call-off contracts at the COSLA meeting on 26 August.</p> <p>DM notified Group that there will be a Glasgow by-election on 6 October which will use the new e-counting system. ACTION: DM to circulate details of by-election in case interested parties can be accommodated to observe.</p> <p>It was noted that the templates needed for ‘national’ data collection, which are mentioned in the Directions, will not be generated by the system. The Electoral Commission will work with the EMB and Scottish Government for best results collation approach. It was agreed that information for Ministers will be available the day after Close of Nominations, i.e. 30 March 2017.</p>	<p>DM</p>
6.0	Other Electoral Events/ Issues	<p>Local Government Boundary Commission Review - Written response was circulated from Joe FitzPatrick (Minister for Parliamentary Business) stating that he is aware of the timescale. ACTION: MMc/RA to share information with EMB if receive any before announcements made.</p>	<p>MMc/RA</p>
7.0	Electoral Commission Strategic Review	<p>MP confirmed that she had written to all ROs asking for input for the EC Review and AON reiterated that deadline for completion is 2 Sept 2016 and that input will feed into the EC Corporate Plan for the next five years. Discussion took place to provide CH with EMB response. ACTION: CH to complete survey on behalf of EMB.</p>	<p>CH</p>

8.0	Sir Eric Pickles' Review into Electoral Fraud	Discussion took place about the key points from the Report. ACTION: Electoral Commission to prepare response and share with EMB.	AON
9.0	EMB Role and Resources	EMB Financial Statement – noted.	
10.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	No updates since last EMB meeting.	
11.0	Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel	Comment that Panel had found that communication in all count centres was very good at SPE2016.	
12.0	EMB Work Programme July 2016 – Feb 2017	CH highlighted fact that an EMB/EC joint seminar will be held in January 2017 for all ROs, DROs and EROs.	
13.0	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn Party Conference Fringe Events –Electoral Commission will be in attendance. • Letter to Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution – MMc confirmed that response is on way. • Review of RO remuneration – MMc confirmed that a review will take place at some point but no schedule confirmed. 	
14.0	Date of Next Meeting	30 September 2016	
Date of future meetings: 30 September 2016, 28 October and 25 November 2016			