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| ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND**ACTION NOTE: 12 NOON THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2019****BOARDROOM, WAVERLEY COURT, CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL HQ, EAST MARKET STREET,** [**EH8 8BG**](https://goo.gl/maps/opVm9vT5kyE4QTmF8) |
| Present: * Board Members: Malcolm Burr (MB, Convener & RO), Steve Grimmond (SG, RO by telephone), Pete Wildman (PW ERO), Kate Crawford (KC, ERO), Jim Savege (JS, RO by telephone),
* Advisers: Dr Penny Curtis (PC Scottish Government), Mark Conaghan (MC DRO/SOLAR rep by telephone), David Miller (DM DRO/AEA Rep), Andy O’Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Martin McKeown, (MM Electoral Commission), Liz Ure (LU Scottish Government), James Newman (JN, Scottish Government)
* In attendance: Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board/DRO), Henni Ouahes Liam Evans and Sarah Smith Law Commission and Gillian Swanson from the Scottish Law Commission
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|  |  | **NOTE** | **ACTION** |
| **1.0/2.0** | **Note of Previous Meeting** **Apologies / Matters Arising** | * Note of previous meeting accepted as accurate
* Apologies from Ian Milton, Angela Leitch, Andrew Kerr, David Martin
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| **3.0** | **Electoral Commissions' Review of Electoral Law** | * Presentation from Henni Ouahes and Sarah Smith. Discussion covered key points identified for reform and current pressures limiting progress. Project Team will move to producing a final report, which they aim to publish in early 2020.
* Guiding principle is that what can be in common across different electoral events and different devolved administrations should be
* **ACTION** **CH** to circulate slides CH to add to agenda for November meeting to collect any comments.
 | **CH**  |
| **4.0**  | **Electoral Commission Update**  | [**Ballot Paper Testing for Scottish Local Government Elections**](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/ballot-paper-ordering-scottish-council-elections)* Study undertaken by IPSOS MORI. Interesting finding that there remains a misunderstanding of STV among some. Scottish Government reaction awaited. **ACTION** note.

**Codes of Practice :** [**Candidate**](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/Draft%20codes%20of%20practice%20for%20candidates%20%28PDF%29.pdf) **and** [**Political Party**](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/Draft%20codes%20of%20practice%20for%20political%20parties%20%28PDF%29_0.pdf)* Codes have been published. There will be consultation in the new year.

**Electoral Registration*** Accuracy and completeness report published. Electoral Commission will discuss findings further with the SAA. Note that the usual issues remain in terms of under representation from those under 34, those in private rented properties and ni address for less that a year. Also general suspicion that registration is increasingly event driven.
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| **5.0** | **Scottish Government Update** | **eCount procurement for 2022 *oral update**** Project Board at end of August made some key decisions: contract will be for a single even rather than multiple elections; it will be a single contract, including print; innovation will be addressed through separate contracts for by-elections.
* Agency Agreement – drafted such that Scottish Government will act as agent for each of the 32 councils to clarify legal position. This is a move away from the framework contract with separate user agreements. Aim to have this agreed and signed off by the end of November. MB will circulate round SOLACE for comment from Chief Execs and their legal teams.
* ITT to be finalised in January for issue.

**Canvass Reform *oral update**** A concern is if SI is delayed may be too late for application in 2020.
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| **6.0** | **Scotland Office / Cabinet Office Update** | * No update provided.
* **ACTION** **CH** to contact Cabinet Officer to invite participation in Board meetings especially where relevant issues are in discussion. Telephone conference facilities to be offered.
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| **7.0** | **Current Legislation (including evidence provided by the EMB to SP committees)** | [**Referendums (Scotland) Bill**](https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/111844.aspx)* EMB have provided written evidence and oral evidence to committee

[**Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill**](https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112098.aspx)* EMB have provided written evidence and oral evidence to committee

[**Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill**](https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112675.aspx)* Call for written evidence. **ACTION** CH to draft and circulate for comment. Deadline is 7 November.
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| **8.0** | **Electoral Registration Update from the Electoral Registration Committee of the SAA** | * Canvas is progressing well with a growth in the online application route. Channel shift is definitely progressing.
* Note the variance across the country with respect to monthly updates – some EROs have not produced October / November updates. Parties could object with respect to lack of consistency and might offer a problem with respect to a potential November or December UKPGE. SAA recommend that October and November updates should be routine.
* Canvas reform discussions continue. Note concern with respect to layering of different tasks which is introducing risk.
* Note issues around an early December poll where 1 December publication would impact poll register numbers etc.
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| **9.0** | **Local government Boundary Commission for Scotland – to note proposals for islands** | * Noted
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| **10.0** | **Promoting Resilience and Preparedness in Electoral Administration, including issues raised by RO teams** | **Contingency and Preparation for unscheduled events** * Turnover of ROs and DROs continues. Note that Angela Leitch will be demitting her role as RO and therefore as member of EMB to take up a new role in public service in Scotland.
* EMB is considering circulating a note for ROs on issues to review to address particular challenges and risks associated with a winter poll.

**EMB approach to governance/support*** Approach adopted for the EPEs in May would be repeated with teleconferences and email bulletins weekly or fortnightly.

**Recommendations to ROs/EROs for delivery of unscheduled UKPGE*** It is proposed that the EMB Convener would make the usual recommendations to ROs and EROs with respect to dates of poll card dispatch, postal vote dispatch and key dates for SIENA etc.

**Potential timetables** * Draft timetables are in preparation for a range of potential election dates. Will be circulated should a date become clear. Note that some dates introduce challenges e.g. with respect to 2 December Bank Holiday or 1 December publication or new register following annual canvas.

**Police Scotland support and guidance*** Police Scotland national SPOC planning briefing event for divisional SPOCs. EMB, SAA and Electoral Commission to brief officers
* Security information to be reviewed by Police Scotland ahead of next UKPGE to allow circulation to candidates and agents
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| **11.0** | **Other work programme elements – consistency, efficiency, integrity, innovation**  | **RO / DRO Training in Signature Verification*** Need identified to address staff turnover and need generally to refresh skills. Two sessions have been scheduled to be led by Forensic Science handwriting specialists from the SPA, to be held in Glasgow on 16 October and Aberdeen (Aberdeenshire Council) on 22 October. Good representation so far from most RO teams. Funded by EMB.

**eCount 2022** * Dealt with earlier in the meeting’s agenda (5.0 above)
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| **12.0** | **EMB Financial Statement** | * Noted.
* Scottish Government have made the payment of the EMB grant for 2019/20
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| **13.0** | **EMB Annual Report** | * Draft is in process of final edit and review.
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| **14.0** | **EMB Resourcing – support from the Scottish Government** | * Noted discussions with Scottish Government to formalised EMB resourcing with respect to support supplied by the city of Edinburgh
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| **15.0** | **Local Council by-elections**  | * There have been several by-elections for Scottish Councils in recent weeks with several more scheduled through October and November. EMB representatives to visit Aberdeen for count on 4 October which includes two vacancies in a single ward.
* Full [log of by-elections since May 2017](http://www.electionsscotland.info/info/5/electoral_management_board/92/log_of_council_by-elections) on the EMB website
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| **16.0** | **Regional Returning Officers’ Group / ECAB and associated meetings** | * No recent meetings to report.
* Next ERRWG is 8 November. EMB will be represented, at least by telephone.
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| **17.0** | **Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel (SPPPP) 20 November 2019**  | * Proposal for an “All Scotland Polling Scheme” – paper submitted from SNP via SPPPP for consideration of EMB. It was noted that the proposals were mainly for the benefit of the parties rather than administrators or the voter. There may be options for current schemes to be collated and hosted somewhere accessible to parties. **ACTION** – CH/MB to consider further and possibly consult with Improvement Service ; CH/ PW to discuss ahead of SPPP
* Behaviour of agents and campaigners. A DRO had raised concerns about behaviour agents at some polling places intimidating voters and failing to comply with requests of the Presiding Officer. Views of other DROs had been sought to assess whether this was a broader problem. No significant issues were reported elsewhere. **ACTION** – to be raised at SPPP and possibly with Chief Exec of the party concerned.
 | **CH MB****PW****CH** |
| **18.0** | **AEA Branch Update**  | * Circulated
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| **19.0** | **AOB** | * None
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**Dates of Future Meetings**

Meetings are scheduled for the Thursday prior to the Friday of the Leaders meetings dates /SOLACE.

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| **28 November** | Edinburgh 2pm |

The venues are currently indicated as Edinburgh but may be revised depending on other factors.