

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND
ACTION NOTE: Friday 27 September, 1:30pm
Burns 1 Room, COSLA, Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards
Edinburgh EH12 5BH

Present:

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Brian Byrne (BB ERO, SAA rep), Bob Jack (BJ RO), Sue Bruce (SB RO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO), Stuart Galloway (SG DRO)
- **Advisers:** Andy O’Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Gordon Blair, (GB, DRO SOLAR representative), Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office) Gillian Cross (GC Scottish Government), Jaime Neal (JN Scottish Government)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Dougie McGregor (DMCG Referendum Governance Consultant), Anne Laird (AL Referendum Guidance Consultant), Alison Clyne (AC Referendum Project Manager)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Admin / Matters arising etc	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Miller (DM DRO AEA Rep) • Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government) • Malcolm Burr (MB RO) • David Thomson (DT ERO) • David Martin (DM RO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting, 30 August 2013 (circulated) & Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • The report from the Scottish Government about the eCounting legacy will now be brought to the October meeting of the EMB. ACTION SS 	<p>Noted</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SS</p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p>New EMB Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Convener had written to David Martin, RO and Chief Exec of Renfrewshire and David Thomson, ERO for Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute formally to appoint them to the EMB • Note that Elma Murray, Chief Executive of North Ayrshire had also expressed keen interest in the work of the EMB and could potentially be co-opted as an additional adviser. 	
2	<p>European Parliamentary Elections May 2014</p>	<p>Update From Cabinet Office/Scotland Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA noted that the legislation was on track with an expectation that the regulations would be agreed by the end of October and everything in place by 22 November. • Fees and Charges and accounts – there would now be no change to the usual accounting arrangements. Claims would be managed by the Scotland Office. The long term aim however is that responsibility for these accounts will move in the future as had previously been planned. • RA noted that there had been a change of personnel in the Scotland Office with a new officer now responsible for election accounts. • AON noted that the Electoral Commission guidance for the May polls was now being finalised and should be complete for the end of the year. This includes revised Performance Standards for ROs. <p>Update Report (circulated) / Outline Project Plan (circulated) / Count Collation Model (circulated)</p>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on EMB preparation for the polls as noted. <p>RRO Seminars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed that there will be a number of cluster groups around Scotland to allow the RRO to brief LROs prior to the European polls, probably in February 2014. These may be joint with the Electoral Commission. Further sessions to be planned for post election/pre Referendum. Will allow discussion of RRO directions and Count process 	
3	<p>Scottish Independence Referendum September: Legislation Progress update from Scottish Government</p>	<p>Legislation Progress update from Scottish Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referendum Bill - GC noted the amendments that were to be moved following comments submitted by SOLAR, EMB and others. • Note of amendments had been circulated • ACTION Any comments should be fed back to CH or GC • Franchise Act – now being implemented. EROs and Scottish Government were handling a number of issues that were coming to light including costs and the need to develop a policy on anonymous registration for young Voters. 	<p>ALL</p>
4	<p>Fees and Charges Order Progress - update from Scottish Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention is for the Order to be made as soon as the Bill is enacted. Progress has been made based on the information supplied by local Counting Officers with the aim being to ensure that allocations recognise specific local circumstances 	

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5	Scottish Independence Referendum : CCO Work Programme	<p>CCO Resources - oral update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CH noted the current position with respect to the Resourcing of the CCO’s support team. AL is leading the Guidance workstream, DMcG leading the Governance workstream with support from the City of Edinburgh’s Corporate Programme Office (AL). The team has offices in Edinburgh’s Lothian Chambers. <p>Electoral Commission Preparedness Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Electoral Commission had published a report on the state of preparations for the Referendum; this looks at issues including legislation, the Electoral Commission’s own preparations and the Chief Counting Officers work. No concerns were raised about the current position. <p>Governance /Project Management</p> <p>Governance Update / Project Plan (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. ALL were asked to review the Project plan and feed any comments back via DMcG. Risk Register – a detailed Risk Register was being prepared to cover the CCOs Referendum work. A workshop was to be held to identify and score risks and the register would then be circulated for comment and brought to the October EMB meeting. Regular status reports will be submitted to the EMB monthly, noting progress against the Project Plan, and current risks and the financial position. RAG status approach will be used. Board will be given overall / strategic picture rather than detail 	

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		<p>Financial Statement (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report was noted. • Regular financial reports will be submitted to the EMB and funds recovered monthly from the Scottish Government to cover the costs incurred in the CCO preparations as anticipated in the Financial Memorandum to the Bill <p>Guidance</p> <p>Progress Report on Guidance for Counting Officers oral update / Update from Forms Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significant work already completed by AL in drafting the Guidance was noted. • As sections are completed they are being circulated to SOLAR, ROs EMB etc for consultation and comment. Final draft will be passed to Electoral Commission for comment. • Some specific issues are arising for discussion and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tactile Device – there was discussion around the potential need for a new tactile device, specific to the Ballot Referendum Paper. <p>ACTION SG and JN of the Scottish Government to discuss issues and implications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ballot Paper size and design – RA noted that there had been some discussion in England/Wales about the potential for a 2 column ballot paper for the European Elections. This would not be supported in Scotland given the experience of confusion in 2007. There is a concern that this is being driven by a particular printer. This is unacceptable – paper design is a decision for legislation not to be determined by a printer. ○ Ballot paper size – this is arising from discussion for European 	<p style="text-align: center;">SG JN</p>

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		<p>Elections. There is some concern regarding the ability of some printers to handle long papers. ACTION CH to contact all Election Teams and encourage them to confirm that their printer is able to cope with the potential length of a European Paper containing a large number of candidates. If printer has a limit on the length of the paper, then the RO needs to identify a contingency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Production of Ballot Papers – given the potential for a large turnout, COs will need to print at least 100% of ballot papers. Possibly more to allow for contingency. ACTION AL and Convener to consider whether direction is necessary or whether guidance is sufficient. • Forms Group work is continuing well and to schedule. <p>Count</p> <p>Consultation on Timing Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CH to prepare consultation document for circulation to expose key issues with respect to the count, issues that may impact on the time that declaration will take. These may include geography, process, large turn out, availability of resource etc. Aim is to expose these issues so that any major delays can be understood by media and other stakeholders and well ahead of the event. Document should be ready for issue by end of October. <p>Count Declaration Event / Communications Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significant media interest in the Referendum was clear. It will need expert communications support to cope with this. In addition the EMB is clear that general communication support is needed in support of the Referendum 	<p>CH</p> <p>AL</p> <p>CH</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AON offered to share the Electoral Commissions Communications Plan for the 2011 Referendum. This could be used as a template to draft a specification for communications work. ACTION – Specification is needed for Communications work. Decision will then be taken about how to procure this support. 	<p>AON</p> <p>MP</p>
6	Bulletins / Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New EMB Administrator will be responsible for the Website. Should be live in November. Will hold Guidance material and Forms in a secure area. 	
7	Issues raised by the Election Teams across Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referendum issues around education; note that there has been briefing material issued by ADES/Electoral Commission and Education Scotland CFE Briefing 14: Curriculum for Excellence - Political Literacy – has also been prepared. Also see Scotland's referendum as a learning approach 	Noted
8	Individual Electoral Registration - Update from Cabinet Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation dry run was underway for Scotland. Results have generally been good, but are expected to improve with local data matching. Experience is that data is rarely accurate in any single data source. 	
9	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<p>Elections and Referendums Steering Group – Update from Convener / UK Electoral Advisory Board – Update from Convener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national tender had been let to upload and publish results on the day of the European Count There has been discussion of how RTI from the HMRC will affect elections with respect to polling and count staff. This is a major issue for local payrolls and a clear position is needed. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially this could represent a large additional burden on Elections Teams. <p>Elections & Registrations Working Group – Update from Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No update – recent meetings have focussed on IER issues with input from SAA. 	
10	SOLAR Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the preparation and delivery of the SOLAR Elections seminar. The quality of the handout material in particular was noted. SOLAR should continue to identify training needs and consider how these can best be met. The EMB will continue to support these efforts. 	<p>GB</p> <p>GB</p>
11	Consultations / Evidence Sessions	<p>Consultation on Performance Standards for ROs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. CH to draft response. <p>Anonymous Registration – Northern Ireland – previously circulated for information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted <p>Public Petition PE1483 on a bilingual version of the independence referendum question - circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted. CH would draft a response for submission to the committee. This would identify practical issues, but note that the choice of language was a policy matter and therefore beyond our remit. 	<p>CH</p> <p>CH</p>

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12	Any Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA noted that the Combination rules for use in the event of the European Parliamentary elections being combined with other polls – as is to happen in parts of England and Wales – are out for consultation. This would be relevant for any Uk Parliamentary by-elections in Scotland were they to be held on the 22 May • Note that the IER confirmation process had produced concerns in government regarding the security of the gsx network and as a result it was being discontinued with a new secure public service network PSN to take its place. This will have implications for the count collation process for both the Euro polls and the Referendum. • Law Commission review of electoral legislation is continuing. A meeting has been requested to update the EMB on progress. This has been suggested for 29 November meeting with a separate longer pre-meeting to give detail to interested lawyers, SOLAR members etc. 	
Date of next meeting: 25 October 1:30pm			

Future Meetings

25 October
29 November

20 December
31 January
28 February

28 March
25 April
30 May

27 June
25 July
29 August