

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND
ACTION NOTE: Date: Friday 25 October 2013, 1.30pm
Burns 1 Room, COSLA, Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards
Edinburgh EH12 5BH

Present:

- **Board Members:** Brian Byrne (BB ERO, SAA rep), Sue Bruce (SB RO) Joan Hewton (JH ERO), David Martin, (DM RO)
- **Advisers:** Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Gordon Blair, (GB, DRO SOLAR representative), Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office), Gillian Cross (GC Scottish Government) Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government), David Miller (DM DRO, AEA Rep)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Anne Laird (AL Referendum Guidance Consultant), Alison Clyne (AC Referendum Project Manager), Ros Wilson (RW Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Admin / Matters arising etc	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO) • Bob Jack (BJ RO) • Stuart Galloway (SG DRO) • Dougie McGregor (DMCG Referendum Governance Consultant) • Nick Dishon (ND Electoral Commission) • Malcolm Burr (MB RO) • David Thomson (DT ERO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting, 25 September (circulated) & Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record. 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that the Cabinet Office were moving away from the use of secure gsx network and in its place a new PSN (Public Sector Network) would be rolled out. This would have implications for the proposed approach to count collation for both European Parliamentary Elections and the Referendum. 	
2	European Parliamentary Elections May 2014	<p>2.1 Update from Cabinet Office/Scotland Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RA gave an update on the progress of preparations from the Cabinet Office. Fees and Charges Order has been prepared and is awaiting final approval which is expected mid-December. 	
		<p>2.2 Update Electoral Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AON noted that the European Parliamentary Elections guidance was in preparation with input from the Elections and Referendums Working Group. Guidance would be issued by the end of the year. 	
		<p>2.3 Update from Project Team</p>	
		<p>2.3.1 Outline Project Plan Key Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMcG and AC would provide an outline project plan and risk register for the European Parliamentary Elections for the next meeting of the EMB. This will be consistent with the format being used for the Referendum. 	
		<p>2.3.2 Count collation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMcG will provide support to the RRO for the Regional Count for Scotland. A model for the Count collation has been prepared based on what was undertaken for the 2009 European Parliamentary Election. 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As noted earlier gsx would be replaced by PSN. The approach will also be an opportunity to test process and procedures ahead of the Referendum. 	
		<p>2.3.3 RRO Seminar Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sets of seminars to be planned for 2014 both in partnership with the Electoral Commission; one set in February to focus on preparations for the European Parliamentary Elections, focussing on guidance and directions from the RRO; and one set in mid-June looking at lessons learned from the European Parliamentary Elections and guidance and directions for the Referendum. Dates would take account of other key events in summer 2014 (eg. Commonwealth Games, WWI commemoration events). 	
		<p>2.3.4 Draft Guidance from the Electoral Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timescales were noted above. 	
		<p>2.4 Ballot Paper Printing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As raised at the previous meeting there was some concern regarding the capacity of some printers to produce a ballot paper able to accommodate all of the potential candidates. One printer has intimated that there would be a maximum of 19 candidates given the specifications of the paper and the capacity of their process. While this number is unlikely it remains a risk. It is imperative that there is a single consistent paper for the whole of Scotland and a two column paper would be clearly unacceptable. 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB noted that there may be some options for a paper which could be modified e.g. narrower row heights. However the paper must be the same across Scotland. • ACTION maintain as standing item on EMB agenda. • ACTION All ROs need to ensure that there are contingency arrangements in place to ensure a suitable ballot paper can be produced. 	<p>CH/RW ALL</p>
3	Scottish Independence Referendum September: Legislation Progress update from Scottish Government	<p>Legislation Progress update from Scottish Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GC gave an update on the progress of legislation. The Bill would see its 3rd Stage in the week commencing 11 November. Royal Assent is expected within a further 4/5 weeks. • With respect to the Franchise Act, JH noted that young voters forms are being returned. 	
4	Fees and Charges Order Progress - update from Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work is continuing on the Fees and Charges Order with an expectation that the final figures will be available early in the New Year. 	
5	Scottish Independence Referendum : CCO Work Programme	<p>5.1 OVERVIEW</p> <p>5.2 .1 CCO Resources - oral update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RW has joined the CCO's team as Administrator to support the project work. An email introducing the CCO's team has been circulated to ROs. • The CCO's Team had met with the Scottish Government to discuss progress and the resourcing of the preparations. The budget/financial plan had been shared and the Scottish Government (SS) had agreed to 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p>release funds to the CCO on the basis of a letter of application from the CCO.</p> <p>5.2 Governance /Project Management</p> <p>5.2.1 Risk Register (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Risk Register had been prepared by DMcG and AC, reviewed by AL and CH. • Royal Mail strikes and Fuel suppliers to be noted as potential risks. Printing could potentially be brought forward given that the ballot paper is fixed now. • ACTION: ALL to review and offer any comments/amendments/improvements to AC/DMcG. • ACTION: AC, DMcG to maintain risk register as live document. <p>5.2.2 Project Status Update (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted. The format was welcomed. The status update lists only a limited set of risks. ACTION Full Risk Register to be circulated to EMB each month. <p>5.3 Guidance</p> <p>5.3.1 Progress Report on Guidance for Counting Officers oral update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion took place regarding Issues Paper which identifies key issues surrounding timing of the count and declaration of the Result of the Scottish Independence Referendum. 	<p>ALL</p> <p>AC/DMcG</p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p>5.4 Count Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Guidance is needed on the count process especially with respect to the sequencing of declarations. • Declarations and announcements would only be made on the basis of local authority areas, although the Counting Officers may organise their counts and share totals with observers on other basis e.g. constituencies. <p>5.4.1 Timing of the Declaration of the Result – Issues Paper (draft circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft issues/Consultation paper from CH was circulated. ACTION – any comments/amendments to be forwarded to CH asap to allow paper to be circulated in early November to key stakeholders (media, politicians, ROs) <p>5.5. Communications Planning</p> <p>5.5.1 Meeting with the Electoral Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Communications at the Electoral Commission (Alex Robertson) shared the EC Communications Plan for the 2011 Referendum. AR now to meet with MP and CH to discuss key issues. • ACTION – MP to determine Specification for Communications support. <p>5.5.2 Planning the count Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Planning is needed around the count event. BBC and STV have already made contact to initiate their planning. ACTION MP to determine how this work (media relations, dressing of the hall etc) will be planned 	<p>MP</p> <p>MP</p>

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		and delivered.	
6	Bulletins / Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACTION RW to update Website as a priority. Website to hold Count Issues Paper, and to include a secure area for Guidance. 	RW
7	Issues raised by the Election Teams across Scotland	<p>7.1 Will there be a direction on the maximum number of voters allocated per station/staff numbers?(Aberdeenshire)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This remains under discussion and will be an element of the final guidance issued by the CCO. <p>7.2 Concern about Printing of Euro Ballot Papers – printer could not cope with large number at this size. (Shetland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was discussed earlier in the meeting. 	
8	Individual Electoral Registration - Update from Cabinet Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update had been requested from the Cabinet Office, but none had been received. ACTION – maintain this as a standard item on the agenda. 	CH/RW
9	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<p>9.1 Elections and Referendums Steering Group – Update from Convener / UK Electoral Advisory Board – Update from Convener</p> <p>9.2 Elections & Registrations Working Group – Update from Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CH to attend the next meeting 20 November. It was noted that BB had been a member of the Group but would need to be replaced by an 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
		<p>alternative RO due to his retirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AON and SB noted that video conferencing facilities were available at either the Electoral Commission offices or the City of Edinburgh HQ should delegates prefer not to travel to London. 	
10	SOLAR Elections Working Group Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of the SOLAR Elections Working Group was planned for 29 November. This will allow group to comment on the draft referendum guidance being produced by AL. Meeting will also involve representatives of the Law Commission who are undertaking a review of electoral legislation. Also to consider Purdah issues around the Referendum. These issues are becoming an area of concern for many authorities and will likely become areas of controversy in the coming months. 	
11	Scottish Government Update on eCounting for 2017 Local Government Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS reported that the eCounting legacy report would be brought to the next meeting of the EMB. SS confirmed that this would allow sufficient time for the planning for the procurement for the system needed for 2017. 	
12	Consultations/Evidence Sessions	<p>12.1 Consultation on Performance for ROs – response circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments had been submitted to the Electoral Commission. <p>12.2 Public Petition PE1483 on a bilingual version of the independence referendum question – response circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A response to the request from the Petitions Committee for EMB views had been submitted. 	

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
13	AOB	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting venue - due to the cost of accommodation at COSLA it was agreed that future meetings would be held in alternative accommodation to be supplied by the City of Edinburgh, either at the HQ or in the City Chambers 	
<p>Date of next meeting: 29 November 2pm, Chief Executive's, Board Room, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG</p>			

Future Meetings

20 December
31 January
28 February

28 March
25 April
30 May

27 June
25 July
29 August