

eCOUNTING 2022

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Issue 02 – 10 September 2021

Welcome to the second project bulletin of 2021.

You will find copies of the first and subsequent Bulletins on the EMB website at [eCounting Bulletins 2022](#)

Some of the key information has again been reiterated as a reminder of the opportunities available and dates for your diary.

Info	<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This, and future Bulletins will be sent to the wider election community (ie contact names and details provided by the User Group Members), however, please feel free to circulate to others in your wider teams. • Should you wish any additional names on the circulation list, please drop an email to Aileen Knudsen whose details are below.
Info	<p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one sessions – The project team has conducted a number of one to one sessions with individual councils over the last month and would like to reiterate that this opportunity is always available. If you have any questions or would benefit from an open chat about any aspect of eCounting, we can arrange a Teams call. • Equipment Levels – We would continue to encourage feedback on Liz’s email of Thursday 12 August on proposed level of equipment. A good number of Councils have already responded and it would be really helpful to have any further initial comments by Friday 24th September if possible, please. • Split count centre – Meetings have been taking place with those councils in scope for a split count centres and work will continue to reach a decision with the final two councils (Aberdeenshire and Highland). • eCounting Regional Project Managers – All 8 Regional Project Managers, who will each be responsible for several Councils, have now been appointed and on-boarding training sessions commenced last week with the Project Managers gathering speed on eCounting, key milestones and deliverables and the various Workstreams for May 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Session – A session with your dedicated Regional Project Manager will take place between Monday 20 September and Friday 8 October 2021 dependent on availability. It is highly likely that a further week will be added on to the end of this timescale to offer more flexibility. This session is primarily (but not exclusively) aimed at Election and Count Managers and Depute Returning Officers for your Council. The meeting will be scheduled for approximately 30 minutes to introduce you to your Project Manager, allow you to advise Managers of specific/unique issues for your Local Authority, share your previous eCounting experiences (what went well and what could be improved). A separate email has been sent to the User Group for them to advise of availability for your Council. <p>Following this initial session, we will move onto Count Centre Surveys/Visits where practical. Scheduling of these visits will be discussed and agreed with each Council. The aim of surveys/visits will be to cover the key aspects of delivery. The team will, over time, work with individual Councils to build detailed logistics and delivery plans, and develop all venue requirements including layout planning and surveys</p>
<p>Info</p>	<p>System Demonstrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software changes demonstration (online) 30 Aug – 03 Sep 21 Successful and well attended sessions last week to demo software changes in context of the end to end process. Here are some answers to questions that came up:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting Registration Racking – Still needed? It is no longer required as ballot box trays go directly to ‘Awaiting Scanning’. Registration now uses a duplicate copy of the ballot paper account sheet to register boxes rather than waiting on boxes being brought one by one to registration. • Ballot Paper Accounts – when will these be keyed into the eCounting system? At the commencement of the count on the Friday morning. • Barcode labels – where will the barcode labels be used? Definitely on the ballot paper trays and optionally on the Ballot Paper Accounts • Manual Entry folders – will these be required for all trays? Since manual entries are very uncommon, we suggest a few folders could be available at the ballot box opening and possibly to scanning supervisors. Ballot box information could then be added to blank folders as and when a manual entry is required (for example by adding a barcode label). • Count Results – where does it show the elected candidate? In the ‘Status’ column which details those elected and the stage they were elected. • Drop in session (Silvan House) - 9 Sep 2021 An in-person session took place in Silvan House this week. This provided an early opportunity for election teams to familiarise themselves with the end to end process, count centre set up/layout, workflow and processes and included an opportunity for hands-on experience.

<p>Action</p>	<p>This session was attended by 20 colleagues from across the country and proved to be an extremely useful event, particularly for those with less experience of eCount.</p> <p>A further opportunity for in person drop in sessions in Silvan House will be arranged for later this year, if there is appetite for this.</p> <p>Key dates for your diary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End to End Count Demonstration (Online) – A live streamed end to end eCount session has been scheduled for two dates as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuesday 28th September 10am – 12.30pm Wednesday 29th September 10am – 12.30pm <p>This will provide an opportunity for Senior elections staff eg ROs, DROs and Election Managers to see the final proposed solution for 2022, including the new workflow processes, in a ‘live’ environment. This will be followed by a Q&A session.</p> <p>Invitations have been circulated to all council user group members where it was asked that you forward this invite to your RO and election team colleagues. Please select the date that suits you, and feel free to split attendance across both dates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen - P&J Live - Monday 14 to Friday 18 February 2022 • Edinburgh - Silvan House – Monday 21 February – Friday 25 March 2022 • West of Scotland – Still to be confirmed – this is expected to run for a two week period across February and March 2022, provided we can identify a suitable venue. <p>The booking process for training will begin from late October onwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Training – is currently being developed with a target release date of January 2022 to provide sufficient time to undertake ahead of attending in person training.
<p>Info</p>	<p>WORKING GROUPS</p> <p>Print Working Group Print Working Group kicked off on Monday 30 August 2021 and has so far met twice.</p>

- **Print materials** – reminder that the project will coordinate and deliver print for all 32 councils for the May 2022 election. The print working group is currently finalising proposals for templates of the following documents:
 - Ballots
 - Ballot Papers
 - Ballot Books
 - Oversized ballot papers (optional)
 - Postal Vote Packs
 - Envelopes
 - Instructions to Voters
 - One-piece mailers
 - Corresponding Number Lists (optional)

Their proposals will be sent to the User Group for feedback over the course of the next week.

Reminder – Poll Cards are **not** in scope and ROs are responsible for arranging their poll card printing separately.

Reminder – Postal Vote Pack postage costs are **not** included as part of the cost of postal pack production. Your dedicated Print Controller who will work with you to plan and deliver your print will discuss options for postage through either your own Royal Mail licences, or licences that can be provided and invoiced by Fujitsu.

- **Print Timetable** – the print timetable will be submitted to the EMB for approval at their meeting on Friday 1 October 2021 and then to the eCounting Project Board on Thursday 7 October 2021 and thereafter shared with the User Group. As previously advised this print timetable will be used to finalise detailed print delivery plans including crucial timelines for confirming print quantities.
- **Postal Vote Despatches** – Recommendations will be made by the Print Working Group to the ERO Committee and EMB. The EMB Convener will direct on the number and dates for despatches.
- **Easyprint** – The Print Working Group will agree an approach to EasyPrint Training. As previously mentioned work will take place in November to begin gathering council information (contest info and vacancies etc) to allow users to be set up on EasyPrint. This is the portal that will be used for the upload of data and managing the print process through to proofs and production. EasyPrint training for anyone that requires it will take place in December 2021 and will be followed at the turn of the year by a host of other print activities including mock elections for test of data and processes, as well as formal data upload.
- **Print Inspection** – The Print Working Group will prepare and recommend the print inspection process. The Project Board will agree to this approach which will take into consideration Electoral Commission guidance as well as lessons learned from previous election print.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print Finance – councils are responsible for paying for all elements of print and this will be invoiced directly by Fujitsu to each individual council based on order quantities. A reminder of contract print prices to allow budget forecasting has been provided in the covering email to this Bulletin. <p>Adjudication Working Group The first meeting of the Adjudication Working Group took place on Wednesday 8 September 2021 and the group will consider the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st level adjudication – achieve consistent 1st level adjudication of ballot papers which will feed into training and live events • RO adjudication categories – achieve consistency for RO rejections categories <p>The outcomes of these objectives will be shared with the User Group in due course.</p>

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