

# eCounting 2022 – Q&As

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**eCounting project team contact details:**

Jack Lochans, Project Manager (Email: [jack.lochans@gov.scot](mailto:jack.lochans@gov.scot); Mobile 07717733460)  
Liz Ure, Technical and Assurance Lead (Email: [liz.ure@gov.scot](mailto:liz.ure@gov.scot); Mobile 07769239206)  
Aileen Knudsen, Local Government Liaison (Email: [aileen.knudsen@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:aileen.knudsen@edinburgh.gov.uk);  
Mobile 07912 615832)

**COUNTDOWN TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION ON 5 MAY 2022**



## Project Status Update: Summary

### PROJECT GOVERNANCE

- The Project is proceeding well and everything that should be in place at this point is already delivered or on track.
- Bulletins which are sent to the Council User Group are available on the EMB website at [eCounting Bulletins 2022](#)
- The EMB met on Thursday 28 October 2021 and a subsequent email was sent to Councils on Thursday 4 November 2021 attaching a letter from the Convener of the EMB, Directions and the Print timetable. As required by legislation the Directions have been the subject of formal consultation with the EMB, which includes both ROs and EROs, and with the Electoral Commission. The final Directions reflect comments from those consultations.
- Briefing Event - A Joint Seminar with the Electoral Commission for ROs and EROs will be held on Thursday 27 January 2022 which will address a range of issues related to planning and delivery of the elections next year.

## Project Status Update: Upcoming Dates - 1

### Print Timetable

Live Election available on EasyPrint      Monday 15 November 2021

## Project Status Update: Upcoming Dates - 2

### eCount Face to Face Training

P&J Live, Aberdeen	Monday 14 February – Friday 18 February 2022
Silvan House, Edinburgh	Monday 21 February – Friday 25 March 2022
Lagoon Leisure Centre, Paisley	Monday 28 February – Friday 11 March 2022

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## eCount - Questions and Answers

### EasyPrint

**Q. What do I use EasyPrint for?**

- A. EasyPrint is an online portal which allows users to order and proof all election materials. Some Councils will already be Idox customers and be familiar with EasyPrint and others will not. EasyPrint training is available from your Idox Print Manager to ensure your Council details, data uploads, proofing of print materials all runs smoothly.

### Printing for the Election

**Q. What's the timetable for the various print items?**

- A. The timetable was circulated to the User Group on 9 November 2021 and a copy of the [Print Timetable](#) is available on the EMB website.

**Q. What are the arrangements for print materials for those who are not currently Idox customers?**

- A. The Idox team are currently working with contractors and customers to ensure appropriate arrangement are in place. More information on this will follow shortly.

**Q. What are the arrangements for print inspection?**

- A. The print inspection process will be advised shortly.

### eCount Team

**Q. What are the roles for eCounting?**

- A. **Registration/Verification Operator** – To register each tray and then verify the number of ballot papers scanned matches the number of ballot papers registered.  
**Scanning Operator** – Scan ballot papers for processing by the eCounting system  
**Marshall** – moves ballot paper trays from awaiting scanning racking to Scanning Operators and then to scanning complete racking.  
**Scanning Supervisor** - Will solve any issues at a scanning station and will be required to use their credentials in order for scanning to continue when the issue has been resolved.  
**1<sup>st</sup> Level Adjudicator** – To adjudicate on ballot papers which cannot be processed by the system. Acceptance only or defer to RO adjudication.  
**RO Adjudicator** – Adjudicate on ballot papers which cannot be processed by the system and 1<sup>st</sup> level adjudicators.  
**RO/DRO/Count Centre Manager** – responsible for overseeing the Count, final decision on doubtful ballot papers, escalation management and direct interface with the RO/DRO, ensures the Count is administered in accordance with the roles, declares the results.

## **Q. How many operators should there be at each Workstation?**

- A. This varies from Council to Council, however, the following is recommended as a minimum:-
- Registration/Verification - 2 per workstation – one for keying and the other for checking
  - Scanning Operators – one per workstation
  - Scanning Supervisors – one for small Councils and two for larger Councils
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Level Adjudicators/RO Adjudicators – one per workstation, some Councils opt for two Adjudicators per workstation – one for keying and the other for checking.
  - Count Centre Manager – one as a minimum, more for larger Councils. This role can be undertaken by the Returning Officer, their Depute or Election Manager/Co-ordinator/Officer – usually someone who is key to the election team with knowledge of the poll, postal votes and Count arrangements.

## **eCount Training**

### **Q. What have been/are the training/familiarisation opportunities for eCounting Teams?**

- A. There have been/are a number of training opportunities provided as follows:-
- Software changes demonstrations (online) – August/September 2021
  - Drop In Sessions – September 2021
  - End to End Count Demonstration (online) – September 2021
  - Performance Testing – November 2021
  - Recording of eCounting System Demonstration – will be released shortly
  - eLearning for Roles – scheduled for January 2022
  - Face to Face Training scheduled for:-
    - ✓ P&J Live, Aberdeen – Monday 14 February – Friday 18 February 2022
    - ✓ Silvan House, Edinburgh – Monday 21 February – Friday 25 March 2022
    - ✓ Lagoon Leisure Centre, Paisley – Monday 28 February – Friday 11 March 2022
  - Familiarisation Session at Council Count Venues – Wednesday 4 May 2022

## **Count Centre Venues**

### **Q. What arrangements need to be in place in preparation for the eCounting system set up and removal of equipment?**

- A. The following should be in place:-
- Count Venue Availability – the set-up of the eCounting system will commence at 9am on Monday 2 May 2022. Councils must ensure that power, tables, chairs and racking are available by 9am on Monday 2 May 2022.
  - End of Election – we expect that in almost all circumstances the eCounting equipment will be removed from the premises by 10pm on Friday 6 May 2022. Council are asked to ensure their premises are available until that time.

- Contingency days – You should consider whether to include any addition/ contingency days in your booking in case of unforeseen delays or where it is unlikely your eCounting equipment can be removed by 10pm.
- Delivery of equipment – an appropriate delivery schedule for your equipment should be discussed and agreed with your Regional Manager
- Count Centre Security – as a general rule, we would advise that your Count venue should have one of the following security arrangements in place for the whole of Count week when the Count venue is unoccupied:
  - ✓ A monitored CCTV/intruder alarm system; or
  - ✓ An external security guard presence/patrols; or
  - ✓ Internal security guard/patrols.
- Please advise the Project Team or your Regional Manager if these requirements cannot be met and we will aim to agree a practical alternative with you.
- Additional Equipment – where a Council has agreed to provide their own additional equipment eg large screens, these should be in place in the Count Venue on Monday 2 May 2022.

**Q What power needs to be in place at Count Venues?**

A It is the responsibility of each Council to ensure that power supplies are sufficient to support your Count. Your RM will provide support to work out the power requirements for the eCounting system. If you have any concerns about power, please let your RM or the Project team know.

**Q. Can the Postal Vote Management System be in the same location as the eCount set up?**

A. Yes. There is no problem in principal with setting up PVMS/doing opening sessions in the same hall that the count centre is located in, so long as the 2 activities can be fitted into the space. We suggest that rope/tape barriers or similar should be used to separate the Count area from the PVMS area wherever possible. But please bear in mind that candidates and agents may be present at PVMS opening sessions, so they need to be kept away from the count centre itself.

**Q. Can a Polling Place be run in the same building at the Count Venue?**

A. Yes. However, if you have a Polling Place in your Count Venue you must ensure separate entrance/exits are in the place with tight security at the count venue and no permissible access from the Polling Place to the Count Venue.

## **eCount Reports**

**Q. What reports do I have to publish once the Count is completed?**

- A. There are 7 eCount Results Reports for publication, as directed by the EMB, namely:-
- Declaration of Results (pdf)
  - Candidate Votes per Stage (pdf)
  - First Preference (pdf)
  - Preference by Ballot Box (pdf) (also in csv to merge boxes under 200).
  - Preference Summary (pdf)

- Transfers (pdf)
- Preference Profile (blt file)

**Q. How do I access the Preference Profile report which is a .blt file?**

A. Open the .blt file in 'notepad'.

**Candidates and Agents**

**Q. Will candidates and their agents get an opportunity to review the e-counting system before the actual elections?**

A. Yes. In each of the Count Centres there will be a Candidates and Agents demonstration of eCounting on Wednesday of election week (ie 4 May 2022). However, if you feel that any of your prospective candidates might like an earlier opportunity to see the eCount system and are willing to come to Edinburgh, we will be arranging 1 or 2 demo days in Silvan House during the training period in February/March, subject to demand being sufficient. We will provide further information on general demo days in due course.

**Payment to Fujitsu for eCounting**

**Q. What are the payment arrangements for eCounting?**

A. Councils are responsible for payment all elements of print and this will be invoiced directly by Fujitsu to each individual Council based on order quantities. Contract print prices were advised in an email to the User Group on Friday 10 September 2021 to allow Councils to forecast costs for printing.

**Q. When will Fujitsu invoice me?**

A. Fujitsu will invoice each council on conclusion of the election in May 2022 for all print material.