

Scottish Council Elections

Thursday 5 May 2022

Preparedness and Building on Experience

**A joint Electoral Management Board for Scotland / Electoral
Commission seminar for Scotland's Returning Officers and Electoral
Registration Officers**

Thursday 27 January 2022

10.20 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Joining instructions:

[Click here to join on Microsoft Teams](#)

Purpose of Event

The Scottish Council elections will take place on 5 May 2022.

While we all hope the elections will not take place under Coronavirus restrictions it is prudent to plan to do so at this stage and we continue to take the advice of Public Health Scotland. Building on our experiences of before and after the 2021 Scottish Parliament election, Returning Officers (ROs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) will have to put in place plans and measures to ensure that the polls can be conducted safely and in accordance with prevailing rules and health restrictions.

Planning is key. With this in mind, the Electoral Commission and Electoral Management Board for Scotland are jointly hosting this event for Scotland's ROs and EROs.

Whether you are an experienced RO or ERO, or new to the role, this is an important event for your calendar.

Why should you attend?

The broad theme of the seminar is "preparedness and building on experience". We will be dealing with more candidates than at the last election in May, using a different electoral system, and employing e-counting on the Friday morning.

The seminar will give you the opportunity to hear from the Convener of the EMB on the directions and recommendations he has put in place for the conduct of the poll. The Commission will update on guidance and resources to assist you in delivering the polls and our approach to performance standards.

Sessions will involve input from key stakeholders including EMB, the Commission, Scottish Government, and Police Scotland.

Key Outcomes

In attending the seminar, you will:-

- Learn from the collective and individual experience of other ROs and EROs and their teams arising from the 2021 election.
- Be informed of what is new in terms of rules and legislation, the Directions and recommendations put in place by the Convener of the EMB for the conduct of the polls;
- Become familiar with the sources of support and guidance available to you;
- Have discussed how to deliver the election in the current public health context.
- Develop a greater understanding of the expectations of voters in relation to accessibility matters and of what works well and be able to consider what needs to improve.
- Be aware of the latest Integrity and cyber security matters.
- Understand the principles underpinning the adjudication of ballot papers process and how to undertake that process.
- Consider all aspects of how to undertake a successful count process.

We hope to see you at the event.

Malcolm Burr

**Convener,
EMB for
Scotland**

Andy O'Neill

**Head of Electoral
Commission,
Scotland**

Programme*

- 10.20am **Joining the seminar**
Please ensure you have joined the meeting for the 10.30 start.
[Click here to join the meeting](#)
- 10.30 a.m. **Welcome and Introductory remarks**
Malcolm Burr, Convener, EMB and Andy O'Neill, Head of Electoral Commission, Scotland.
- 10.45 a.m. **Session 1: The legal and regulatory framework within which the elections take place – Chaired by Andy O'Neill**

Martin McKeown, Senior Elections and Campaigners Adviser, Electoral Commission, Chris Highcock, Secretary, EMB and Pete Wildman, Convener, SAA, ERO Committee will outline the legislative and regulatory framework within which the May polls will be held highlighting
- Changes to rules and revisions to guidance;
 - EMB directions and recommendations and the potential for additional guidance;
 - Approaches to performance standards and monitoring of compliance with directions and timetable issues; and
 - Role and priorities of the ERO.
- 11.05 a.m. **Session 2: Covid – the election's delivery in the context of the current public health situation. Chaired by Malcolm Burr**

Jim Savege, RO, Aberdeenshire and EMB Board member, will lead a discussion around the planning assumptions for the election in the context of the ongoing public health situation, building on the lessons from 2021 elections and subsequent developments and experience.
- There follows a series of discussions building on the successes and addressing lessons learned from the 2021 Scottish Parliament election**
- 11:25 am **Session 3: Resilience issues - how to meet the challenges. Chaired by Malcolm Burr**

Steve Grimmond, RO, Fife and EMB Member will lead a discussion of the planning assumptions to deal with issues and risks around suppliers, particularly printed materials; recruitment/training of staff and the election venues.
- 11:50 am **Session 4: Accessibility issues – review and opportunities for improvement – Chaired by Sarah Mackie, Electoral Commission Manager Scotland**

Joyce White, RO West Dunbartonshire and EMB Board Member will lead a session building on recent experience of accessibility performance at the 2021 Scottish Parliament election with contributions from **Ken Reid, RNIB Scotland** and **Ethan Young, Civic Participation Manager, Inclusion Scotland**

12:30pm **Session 5: Awareness, Stakeholder engagement and political literacy - Chaired by Andrew Kerr OBE, RO, City of Edinburgh and EMB Board Member**

Andrew Kerr will lead this session followed by discussion on the range of EC guidance and resources in place to assist ROs, EROs, candidates and agents, and political parties. Also, discussion of stakeholder engagement strategies and political literacy engagements. Contributions from **Catherine Heggie, EC Partnerships and Information Officer, Pete Wildman SAA, ERO** and **Sarah Mackie, EC Manager Scotland**

12:50pm **Lunch**

1:30pm **Session 6: Integrity - Chaired by Martin McKeown, EC, Senior Adviser Elections and Campaigners**

Superintendent Darren Faulds, Police Scotland and **Keith McDevitt, Cyber Resilience Integrator, Scottish Government** will outline how they will approach integrity around the election working with other agencies and specifically directly with councils via SPOCs including a discussion of security of candidates

2:00pm **Session 7: Adjudication of doubtful ballots – Chaired by, Andy O’Neill, EC Head of Office, Scotland**

Malcolm Burr, Convener EMB and RO, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will lead a session discussing the principles underpinning a successful adjudication of ballots and the processes used to achieve this.

2:30pm **Session 8: The Count – Chaired by Malcolm Burr, Convener, EMB**

Kenneth Lawrie, RO, Falkirk and EMB Board Member will lead a briefing followed by discussion of how to undertake a successful count with input from **Colin Moodie DRO, Falkirk, and James Newman and Jack Lochans of the E-counting project.**

3:15pm **Closing remarks - Malcolm Burr, Convener, EMB and Andy O’Neill, Electoral Commission** will sum up the key learning points that Returning Officers and EROs should take away from the seminar and highlight your next steps as ROs and EROs

All times are approximate

*slides will be distributed after the event