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| ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND**ACTION NOTE: 2PM 24 February 2022*****MEETING VIA MS TEAM***  |
| Present: Chris Highcock (DRO, Secretary to EMB), Mel Davidson (Electoral Commission), David Miller, (DRO AEA rep), Andy O’Neill (Electoral Commission) Malcolm Burr (RO and Convener of Board), Jim Savege (RO) Catherine Heggie (Electoral Commission) Sarah Mackie (Electoral Commission) Gillian Cruickshank (Scottish Gov) Penelope Curtis (Scottish Gov) Peter Wildman (ERO SAA) James Newman(Scottish Gov) Maria McCann(Scottish Gov) Mark Conaghan (DRO) Lauchlan Hall (Scottish Gov) Iain Hockenhull (Scottish Gov) Paul Docker (UK Gov) Joyce White (RO) Steve Grimmond (RO) |
|  |  | **NOTE** | **ACTION** |
| **1.0****/****2.0** | **Note of Previous Meeting 10 January 2022** **Apologies / Matters Arising** | * Noted and accepted as an accurate record;
* Apologies received from
	+ Andrew Kerr (RO)
	+ Kenneth Lawrie (RO)
	+ Jim Doig (ERO)
* Matters arising
	+ ERO member appointed to replace Kate Crawford, consent to appointment awaited.
	+ RO Member identified to replace Joyce White on her retirement. Annmarie O’Donnell, Ro for Glasgow has agreed to join the EMB.
 | **Noted** |
| **3.0** | **Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 5 May 2022** | **Briefing for Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Offices, 27 January 2022 – *Review*, *update from Electoral Commission / EMB Members*** * Positive feedback from all participants. Accessibility element especially appreciated with input from voters and candidates with disabilities.
* Up to 187 attendees and framework with EMB members leading discussion was useful in exposing the members to the RO/EOR community.
* In person attendance would still have advantages in term of interaction.

**eCount for 2022 Scottish Local Government Elections Update** * Note that eCount Project Bulletins are available on the EMB website at[*https://www.emb.scot/downloads/download/138/ecounting-bulletins-2022*](https://www.emb.scot/downloads/download/138/ecounting-bulletins-2022)
* Adjudication of doubtful ballots – MB and Electoral Commission to discussion counsel’s opinion and potential relevance to guidance.

**SG update eCounting 2022** * The system to be used in May 2022 is now fully tested and signed off. The system was successfully rolled out to 3 recent by-elections, performing as expected.
* Training for council staff has commenced with Aberdeen training completed, and now commencing in Edinburgh and Paisley. All 32 councils are booked to attend. **JS** noted concern that the Fujitsu branding was prominent at the training. **ACTION** CH to remind ROs that this is an event that they are responsible for and Fujitsu/Idox branding should be minimal.
* eLearning was released to councils in January and will be available until the count.
* Regional Managers are working through implementation plans including design and layout of count centres and all logistics information with a view of completing these over the coming weeks.
* Fujitsu count week support staff (Managers and Engineers) recruitment is progressing with the initial batch of staff undergoing training. All staff will be in place by 28th March.
* The build of 32 council systems has now commenced and will take place up until mid-April.
* Print is progressing well with all councils completed their order lockdown. Royal Mail have approved all PV envelopes and preliminary data has been uploaded and tested on EasyPrint, ready for the live print process.
* Ongoing communication is taking place through regular bulletin and Q&A updates. Two factsheets were also circulated last week and are available on the EMB website.
* **DM** noted that Idox is contractor delivering eCount and print in Maltese General Election and that this may pose a risk to the 5 May election which needs assessed.

**Forms Working Group*** FWG refocusing on a smaller suite of essential forms that are not produced elsewhere. Will continue development post SLGE22.
* Range of forms for 5 May 22 now posted on EMB website for download including updated Notice of Election.

**Public Health Scotland: impact of Coronavirus on election delivery*** Further advice awaited from PHS as they review changing guidance and strategic framework.
* Assumed position is to repeat approach from May 2021 with measures to be relaxed where appropriate but taking account of the caution and nervousness of some voters.
* No additional funding to cover the Covid measures
* General direction is back to normal but with some continued caution
* **ACTION** – standing item on the agenda with feedback provided to PHS after the election

**2022 Local Government Candidate Diversity Survey** * Survey forms now finalised
* To be circulated to ROs to be handed out when Nomination Papers are submitted
* Also possible to complete via a website, QR code and website to be circulated to candidates. Full information at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/diversity-in-political-representation-in-scotland/>
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| **4.0** | **Review of Electoral Commission Returning Officer Performance Standards**  | **Mel Davidson (Head of Support and Improvement to lead discussion*** As part of work to support ROs, Electoral Commission ensure the standards are reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in the electoral environment
	+ Carry out a full review of RO performance standards
	+ Bring the standards in line with the new ERO standards
	+ Incorporate changes that are coming as part of the elections bill and other relevant legislation
	+ Make the standards more outcome focused
* There will be more opportunities to feed in thoughts over the next few months
* A formal consultation will take place in summer 2022
* **ACTION** Powerpoint slides to be circulated
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| **5.0** | **Scottish Government General Update** | * Written updated circulated

**Statutory instruments*** The following instruments were made in November 2021:
* The Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2021
* The Representation of the People (Absent Voting at Local Government Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021
* The Representation of the People (Postal Voting for Local Government Elections) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021
* The Representation of the People (Variation of Limit of Candidates’ Local Government Election Expenses) (Scotland) Order 2021
* The Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006 (Commencement No. 6) Order 2021
* The Scottish Elections Reform Act 2020 (Commencement No. 3) Order 2021
* A further instrument, the [**Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2022**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2022/9780111052655/introduction), was made in January. As requested by the Convener of the EMB in November 2021, this includes provisions to move the earliest date when poll cards can be issued - from after the issue of the notice of poll (30 March) to after the publication of the notice of election (14 March). Earlier issue of poll cards will be to the benefit of electors giving them official notification of the election at an earlier date, and allow more time to apply for an absent vote should they require it. This change will also bring practice at Scottish Local Government elections into line with the Scottish Parliament election.

**UK Elections Bill** * The Scottish Parliament’s Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee reported on the UK Elections Bill on 22 December. The Committee’s report and the Scottish Government’s Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to the Bill is available at: <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/legislative-consent-memorandums/elections-bill?qry=elections%20bill> The Scottish Parliament [debated](https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-01-02-2022?meeting=13558&iob=123037) the Bill on 1 February and voted to endorse the position of the Scottish Government in relation to legislative consent.
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| **6.0** | **UK Government Update** | * Written update circulated from DLUHC
* Accessibility work underway across 4 nations with involvement of Electoral Commission
* UK Elections Bill work continuing to develop secondary legislation with input of Expert Panel and Business Change Network which includes representatives from Scotland.
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| **7.0** | **Electoral Commission General Update** | * CHeg explained Electoral Commission’s Public Awareness activities including
	+ Welcome to your Vote day
	+ Booklet to go to all households w/c 28 March
	+ BSL and Easy read materials available
	+ Range of media releases templates etc available via website.
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| **8.0** | **Electoral Registration Update from the Electoral Registration Committee of the SAA** | * PW noted that the issue of HNLs by many EROs (not all made an issue) had been effective with a spike in registrations and requests for postal votes as a result
* SAA meetings had agreed common dates and approach for collation of electorate date at FENA.
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| **9.0** | **Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland** | * None
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| **10.0** | **AEA Update** | * None
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| **11.0**  | **Any Other Business**  | None |  |

**Dates of Future Meetings until May 2021**

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS / WORK SCHEDULE**

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| **Month** | **All at 2pm****Teams as default** | **Notes** |
| March 2022 | 24 March |   |
| April 2022 | 28 April | Final meeting before 5 May polling/ 6 May eCount  |
| June 2022 | 23 June | Opportunity for initial feedback on the conduct of the election |