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| ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND**NOTE OF MEETING OF 2 DECEMBER 2022, 2PM*****MEETING HELD VIA MS TEAMS***  |
| Present: Malcolm Burr (Convener) Annemarie O'Donnell (RO) Andrew Kerr (RO) Jim Savege (RO) Kenneth Lawrie (RO) Steve Grimmond (RO) Peter Wildman (ERO) Doig, Jim (ERO) Andy Hunter (AEA rep) Mark Conaghan (SOLAR rep) Andy O’Neill (Electoral Commission) Kelsey Gillies (Electoral Commission) Catherine Heggie (Electoral Commission) Penelope Curtis (Scottish Government) Liz Ure (Scottish Government) Maria McCann (Scottish Government) Iain Hockenhull (Scottish Government) Paul Docker (UK Government) Isabel Drummond-Murray (Boundaries Scotland) Chris Highcock (Secretary)  |
|  |  | **NOTE** | **ACTION** |
| **1.0/****2.0** | **Apologies/Matters Arising****Note of previous meeting** | * Apologies from Mark Adam (ERO member)
* Note of the meeting of 5 October accepted. All matters arising were on the agenda.
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| **3.0** | **Scottish Local Government Elections 5 May 2022** | **Candidate Survey** * Previously circulated*.* Noted
* The survey had been well promoted by ROs. There was a fairly low response rate but it was average for this type of survey. Variety of data generated to feed info future considerations of encouraging participation in elections.
* **ACTION** – to be shared with SP PPP
 | **MMcC** |
| **4.0** | **eCount at Local Government by-elections 2022-27** | * New contract arrangements noted.
* There will be quarterly reviews of performance by an oversight group including Scottish Government and the Secretary of the EMB.
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| **5.0** | **EMB Future Work Programme** | **Follow up actions from the SLGE 2022** * Noted, to be incorporated in to EMB work programme. Some will need joint work with Electoral Commission and governments.

**Accessibility*** Key workstream for Scottish Government and also within UK Elections Act. EMB to establish working group. To consider issues and develop solutions with representation from stakeholders and RO teams. **ACTION** Terms of Reference to be brought to next EMB.

**Implementation of UK Elections Act 2022*** Current position noted around SIs and ongoing work with UK Government. Note that ERO portal will be live from 16 January

**Coordination of observation visits to English elections in May 2023*** **ACTION** CH and AON to develop schedule of contacts across comparable English authorities to facilitate observation. AEA also offering to assist in coordination. ROs and DROs to be invited.

**Capacity building in the sector / Proposed RO/ERO Seminar for 2023*** Review of the May 2022 elections highlighted concern over capacity of councils to deliver elections. As part of EMB work programme for the coming year there will be consideration of how the EMB can support capacity building for the sector
* This will be considered at a planning day in early January.
* Usual annual seminar will be held at a date to be determined, but will allow lessons from application of Voter ID in English May elections to be considered.

**Development of the EMB** * Discussion Paper circulated. To be considered further in the context of the Scottish Government Electoral Reform consultation
 | **LU CH** |
| **6.0** | **Referendum Guidance** | * Updated position noted.
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| **7.0** | **Scottish Government Update** | **Electoral Reform Bill consultation*** The consultation is a first step in the process of preparing a Bill to be considered by Parliament in 2024.
* This Bill will take forward the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Shared Policy Programme commitments to enable more people to stand as candidates at Scottish Parliament and local government elections and to improve the accessibility of elections, with a particular focus on people with sight loss.
* The consultation will also be an opportunity to consult on ways to increase voter registration including qualifying foreign nationals and young people.
* The consultation is expected to be launched before Christmas
* We are grateful for the feedback EMB members have provided on the proposed consultation topics.

**UK Elections Act 2022*** UK Elections Act 2022 received royal assent on 28 April 2022. Implementation of the Act is underway, with the expectation that provisions for Westminster elections including voter ID and accessibility at polling stations will be implemented by May 2023.
* The Scottish Government’s Electoral Reform consultation will provide an opportunity to consult on issues raised by the UK Elections Act.
* The Scottish Parliament did not give legislative consent to the Elections Bill. The Legislative Consent Memorandum can be found at:<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/legislative-consent-memorandums/elections-bill?qry=elections%20bill>
* This has raised further issues of divergence in practice between reserved and devolved elections. Officials in the UKG and SG are working closely to consider how best these can be handled in the interests of the voter and in order to best support electoral administrators. Discussions will include EMB members.
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| **8.0** | **UK Government Update** | **UK Funding Working Group*** Written update noted
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| **9.0** | **Electoral Commission General Update** | * Written update circulated and noted, covering changes and guidance flowing from the Elections Act, Completeness and Accuracy Survey and Welcome to your Vote Week 2023.
* UK Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee [report on the work of the Electoral Commission](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/375/the-work-of-the-electoral-commission/news/173696/challenges-lie-ahead-for-elections-regulator-in-navigating-complex-law/) - noted
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| **10.0** | **Electoral Registration Update from the Electoral Registration Committee of the SAA** | * Major work underway to deliver Voter Authority Certificates with system live from 16 January.
* New registers published 1 December
* PV Refresh letters to go out 9 January 2023.
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| **11.0** | **Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland** | * Noted that consultation on new UK boundaries was open, running form 8 November until 5 December with new proposals to be submitted to the Speaker by 1 July 2023.
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| **10.0** | **AEA Update** | * Written update noted
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| **11.0**  | **EMB Administration** | * **Annual report** – draft circulated for comment. **ACTION** Convener to finalise / review to allow submission early in 2023.
* Membership – note that a new RO member will need to be identified to cover vacancy following retirement of Steve Grimmond. ACTION MB CH to discuss
 | **MB****MB** |
| **12.0** | **Log of By-Elections** | * Noted
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**Future Meetings**

* 25 January 2023, 14:00
* 30 March 2023, 14:00