

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND
ACTION NOTE: 27 January 2012 2:00pm
City of Edinburgh Council HQ

Present:

- **Board members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Brian Byrne (BB ERO, SAA rep), Douglas Gillespie (DG ERO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO) Bob Jack (RJ RO), Malcolm Burr, (MB RO),
- **Advisers:** David Freeland (DF Electoral Commission) Alex Thomson (AT Scottish Government Consultant) Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office) Gordon Blair (GB DRO SOLAR rep) Andy Sinclair (AS Scottish Government)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO) Ian McKay, Brian Smith (Royal Mail) David Anning (Logica)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
	Presentation: Royal Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian McKay / Brian Smith attended to outline Royal Mail’s preparations for the election and to take questions • Dates for dispatch of pollcards (by 2 April) & postal votes ((by 23 April) were identified • It was clarified that sweeps need to deliver postals to RO by 10pm not later, even in the case of a next day count • It was noted that Walksort was to be discontinued but that there would be a replacement product. • Some price rises are expected around 2 April • ACTION – ALL ROs / EROs to provide their print schedule to Royal Mail so that logistics and capacity can be planned appropriately; ROs / EROs also to provide estimates of volumes • ACTION - ALL to consider whether poll cards would be released earlier to avoid price increases. 	CH to inform all ROs / EROs
	Presentation from David Anning (Logica)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Anning – Logica eCounting Project Manager made a short presentation outlining key progress with respect to the eCounting project. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ROs were required to identify contingency arrangements for their counts. • Scottish Government were to refresh their communication approach and ensure that there was clear and consistent flow of information to ROs about the project 	AS
1	Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Galloway (SG DRO) • Sheila Scobie (SSc Scotland Office) • Billy Pollock (WP DRO AEA rep) • Steve Sadler (SS Scottish Government) • Jon Harris (JH COSLA), • David Anderson (DA RO) • Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission) 	Noted
2	Note of Previous Meeting (14 December 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted as an accurate record. • There were no matters arising which were not already on the agenda. 	Noted
3	Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 2012	<p>Preparation for Scottish Local Government Elections 2012</p> <p>Legislation / Supplementary legislation (update from Scottish Government)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted last month supplementary legislation had been finalised for these elections addressing some additional areas omitted from the Order. • Electoral Commission would update Guidance to reflect these changes <p>EMB Work Programme Update</p> <p>Pre Election Period – Draft Guidance Material (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance used in Edinburgh was to be circulated to all ROs as a template for their consideration. This was not a direction due to local practice and traditional approaches. However the guidance would express 	CH

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		<p>the key principles and illustrate them with scenarios.</p> <p>Direction on Count Timing (draft circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft direction was considered in the light of the consultation material. The direction was to be redrafted for circulation to ROs to add clarity. ACTION CH to redraft and circulate to EMB for comment, then Convener for approval and circulation to all ROs and all who contributed to the consultation process. <p>Information in the Count Centre for Observers – update from Alex Thomson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AT noted that he would present proposals to the eCounting User group on the following Tuesday. There would be a suite of material proposed to ensure that candidates and agents understood the process and were familiar with what was happening at each stage and part of the count. <p>E Counting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues were dealt with during the presentation from David Anning <p>Printing Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealt with during the presentation from David Anning. It was noted that print remains a major risk area for the whole election process. <p>Risks involved in the production and delivery of ballot papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted during presentation from David Anning. Mitigating actions include contingency arrangements for printing, redundant equipment and effort to 	CH

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		<p>deliver ballot papers early to ensure that they are distributed around the country and not all held in one place.</p> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logica project managers were liaising with Councils to arrange training sessions for all count staff and ROs. Noted <p>Ballot Boxes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballot Box design was still being finalised. <p>Adjudication – Doubtful Papers: Guidance from the Electoral Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjudication guidance and placemats were being finalised to be published by the Electoral Commission. Note that there would be clear guidance that a paper which was solely marked with a number other than 1 would be rejected, e.g. a 3 against the 3rd candidate etc. Note there was some discussion around the interpretation of the Elections Order which implies that while such a paper with the number “3” as a figure would be rejected a paper with the word “three” would be accepted. ACTION Electoral Commission to seek Counsel’s opinion The key issue is consistency. ACTION ALL ROs to ensure that the placemat is available at count centres and distributed to candidates and agents <p>Recounts – Paper from Scottish Government eCounting Project (circulated)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted 	<p>EC</p> <p>ALL</p>

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		<p>RO Performance Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that all ROs had submitted the first return and those chosen to submit further information had done so. This was being reviewed by the Electoral Commission and would be shared with the Convener for follow up action where appropriate <p>Joint Briefings / Spring Seminars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted <p>Public Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning was well advanced for a national campaign involving press, radio and TV, with a booklet also delivered to every household. Communications Network had been briefed such that local campaigns would align with the national effort. <p>Postal Voting / Royal Mail issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major issues were covered during the presentation from the Royal Mail. In terms of timetabling it was noted that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If poll cards can be distributed by 30/3 EROs could avoid the increased postal charges expected to come in on 2/4 ACTION EROs to consider potential for earlier dispatch 	<p>ALL</p>

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4	EMB Administration	EMB Subgroups: Forms Group / Communication Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms were now available for download and were being widely used • Communication network was well engaged in public awareness activities 	Noted
5	Bulletin / Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future topics to be intimated to CH 	CH
6	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted. Neither the Convener nor the Secretary had attended recent meetings due to diary pressure and lack of relevance for Scottish elections. • For reference, papers are available at http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/elections/elections-and-referendums-working-groups) 	Noted
8	Scottish Political Parties Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting to be held on 31 January 	NOTED
9	Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Commission paper on the timing of election counts, noted response to be prepared • Scottish Government consultation on the proposed Referendum. Note the role that is given to the EMB. ACTION EMB response required. 	CH CH
10	Any Other Business	Electoral Commission Briefings for political parties & candidates on local government elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB to provide representative to work with the Electoral Commission ACTION EC to liaise with Convener and CH Potential for Industrial Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note potential for Industrial action around the time of the election. 	DF CH

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		<p>ACTION future meeting to discuss risk management</p> <p>Official Mark (to be tabled)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed official mark tabled but felt to be potentially confusing. ACTION revised design to be sourced <p>Joint Candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that there had been some approaches by Green Party enquiring about the potential for allowing job share candidates. ACTION to be raised at PPP. 	<p>ALL</p> <p>CH</p> <p>CH</p>
11	Dates of future meetings	<p>The following dates were agreed for the EMB meetings in 2012, starting at 2pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 February 2012 30 March 2012 20 April 2012 25 May 2012 29 June 2012 31 August 2012 28 September 2012 19 October 2012 16 November 2012 14 December 2012 	<p>NOTED</p>
Date of next meeting - 24 February 2012, 2pm			