ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

REPORT: **e-Counting Project 2017 – Update as at January 2017**

MEETING: **27 January 2017**

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the latest update on the current status of the preparatory work which is underway in relation to the e-Counting Project 2017.

GATEWAY REVIEW 4 (Readiness for Service)

2. The most recent Gateway project assurance review took place between 1 November and 3 November 2016. The reviewers were focused on our readiness to progress to the delivery of e-counting in May 2017. This was the most successful review to date, receiving a Green rating. The lead reviewer, William Harrod, commented that this was the first time that he had been able to make a report with no recommendations and that he was very impressed with the progress made, notably in engaging with stakeholders.

Technical Assurance Review

3. To strengthen the technical assurance element of the e-counting project, it was proposed that the Scottish Government's Chief Information Officer (CIO) and IT Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) carry out a short Independent Technical Review of key areas of the project. This Independent Review was jointly commissioned by the Scottish Government's Director of Strategy and Constitution and the CIO. The Review Team was commissioned on 24 October 2016 and undertook a series of interviews at Pentland House, Edinburgh on 28 October 2016.
The Technical Review report acknowledged that the project was meeting targets set both in respect of technical requirements and timescales. The Technical Review report did, however, offer a few recommendations which were accepted by the Project Team. An Action Plan for addressing the recommendations was produced and this has also been circulated to the Board.

TRAINING

4. Arrangements are well in hand for the training which is scheduled to take place in Aberdeen and Edinburgh over a five week period commencing 20 February. Authorities have been asked to provide delegate names and confirm the role that that each person is to be trained in. The Project Team are liaising with CGI to develop relevant content for the training session that is being provided on the day for Retuning Officers and Election Managers.

DATA COLLECTION

5. Draft copies of Data Collection Returns covering Nomination data and a comprehensive suite of Results information were issued by Chris Highcock in December, and presented at the joint planning event held in Glasgow on 12 January.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6. This work stream is being taken forward as a joint initiative with the Electoral Commission. Final adjustments are being made to the survey contents, exception process etc. The five ROs within the performance standard sample have already been invited to submit material.

PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS & POSTAL VOTING PACKS

7. A short-life working group was established to capture all known printing issues and to act as a forum for ensuring that these issues are addressed and appropriately communicated. The group has now met on three separate occasions, with representation from both CGI and Idox, to agree the form and content of ballot papers, postal voting packs, the pictorial insert etc. It is envisaged that this group has discharged its remit and future work will be taken forward by the User Group which has substantially the same representation.

OTHER MATTERS

8. The Board is invited to note the position in relation to:
    - The Project Team will be commencing the issue of a "Question and Answer" circular in the largely the same style as 2012. This will be issued weekly to authorities from around the end of January with new material highlighted and all previous content retained for reference.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The Board is invited to:
    - Note the current status of the key tasks within the e-Counting Project 2017.

D McGregor,

Edinburgh,

20 January 2017