e-Counting for the
2017
Scottish Local Government Elections

INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM THE PROJECT TEAM
Issue 08, 16th December 2016

Merry Christmas

FOR INFO.	• **Bulletin** – this is the latest Bulletin aimed at informing the electoral community of progress with the project to deliver e-counting for the 2017 local government elections. As this project develops, further Bulletins will be issued regularly by the e-counting Project Team, whose contact details are below. • **Q&A** – early in the new year we will begin to circulate an 'e-Counting Q&A 2017' document. This will be a more detailed document which will seek to address all manner of practical questions around e-counting and matters related to it. As time goes on the Q&A will grow (we won't delete items) and will hopefully provide a useful resource for all ROs and their election teams.	

FOR INFO.	**FURTHER e-COUNTED BY-ELECTIONS**
	
	• Since the last Bulletin was issued, **by-elections** have taken place using the 2017 version of the e-count software and equipment, in the following councils:
	
	   – Aberdeenshire (4 November)
	   – Angus (29 November and 6 December)
	   – Fife (15 December)
	
	• All of the counts were completed without any problems and the new reports were used. Again, we have seen a noticeable reduction in adjudication rates (typically in the mid-teens) compared to those typically seen when using the 2012 version of the system. One final by-election is scheduled prior to May 2017 and this will take place in East Ayrshire Council in January.
	
	PRINTING ISSUES
	
	EASYPRINT WORKSHOP
	
	• This time round, the main e-counting Framework contract includes provision for the printing of all station ballot papers and postal ballot packs. Idox are the supplier partner in charge of this element. Some authorities will already be Idox customers while others will not.	

FOR INFO.	• As trailed in the last Bulletin, a workshop event to review **EasyPrint** and related printing issues, was held on 16 November at Pentland House in Edinburgh. This well-attended workshop session was led by the Idox team allowing all councils the opportunity to understand their approach, ask questions and to make Idox aware of their needs. The presentation slides are now available on the Portal which I hope election teams are beginning to see as a helpful resource.

PRINT WORKING GROUP

• As mentioned in the last Bulletin, a **Print Working Group** has been established to take the lead in assuring that all elements of ballot paper production, printing, proofing and distribution are properly addressed. At their first two meetings, the Group has reviewed the contingency and continuity arrangements with regard to the printing and distribution of ballot papers and postal vote packs. In addition, the Group has reviewed all the print products and will be making recommendations on these to the EMB. The Print Working Group will meet again on 13 January 2017. |
| **TO RESPOND** | *PRINT: UPDATE FROM IDOX*

• **Training** is being offered for EasyPrint from 10th – 20th January. Please would councils contact their Print Controllers to book a slot.

• Idox would like to remind councils to ensure that they have confirmed their **Royal Mail Licences** as well as any changes required, with the RM postal voting team.

• **Spreadsheets** have been sent out to councils to gather information for print. Please could councils return them to their Print Controllers with as much information as possible, before the Christmas break. |
| **TO NOTE** | **e-COUNT TRAINING – FEBRUARY/ MARCH 2017**

• Role-based training will be available for the benefit of all council staff who will be taking parting in election counts on 5 May 2017. For the more northerly councils, training has been scheduled in Aberdeen during the week commencing 20 February. Over the following 4 weeks, sessions have been arranged to take place at Pentland House in Edinburgh. For some time now, Dougie McGregor has been liaising with all councils to help finalise arrangements. Please get in touch if there are any queries. Otherwise, more information on the format and content of the role-based training will follow in the new year. |
| **TO NOTE** | **DATA COLLECTION**

• As you may be aware, EMB Direction 9 relates to the 'Provision of Information' by councils relating to the elections in each of their wards. The purpose of this is to allow the EMB to compile a full analysis of results for each of the contests across all 32 councils. The collated data is to be published on the EMB website on 5 May **providing Scotland-wide results immediately after the completion of all counts**. The lack of such a resource resulted in some public and media criticism in 2012. |

TO NOTE	• On 15 December, Chris Highcock circulated a note to all ROs on this subject. He included two pro-forma data returns which are largely for your information at this point. This will be discussed at the EMB/ Electoral Commission event which takes place on 12 January 2017 (see below). **FORTHCOMING EVENTS** • 12 January 2017 – *Preparing for the Scottish Local Government elections 2017*. This Electoral Commission/ EMB event, which is open to all ROs and a senior member of their teams, **takes place in Glasgow City Chambers**. The aim of the day is to discuss key planning issues and strategic considerations concerning the arrangements to be in place for the elections and to consider how best they can be delivered. The sessions will be led by the EMB, the Electoral Commission and other members of the electoral community. ***** BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR *****

For more information please contact a member of the <u>e-counting Project Team</u>:

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