

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND
ACTION NOTE: Thursday 2 November 2017 12.30pm
Chief Executive's Board Room
Waverley Court, East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Present:

- **Board Members:** Pete Wildman (PW ERO/SAA Rep), Kate Crawford (KC ERO/SAA Rep), Jim Savege (JS RO) via Skype
- **Advisers:** Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep), David Miller (DMi DRO/AEA Rep), Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Mette Christensen (MC Electoral Commission)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board/DRO), Fran Cattnach (FC Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION
1.0/ 2.0	Admin/Note of Previous Meeting/Matters arising etc.	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roddy Angus (RA Scottish Government) • David Martin (DM RO) • Ian Milton (IM ERO/SAA Rep) • Andrew Kerr (AK RO) • Elma Murray (EM RO) • Malcolm Burr (MB RO) • Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison) • Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO) <p>Note of Previous Meeting (25 August 2017) & Matters Arising The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. CH explained that MP's car had broken down on the way to attend the meeting so he would chair the meeting.</p>	

		<p>DM confirmed that a lawyer from Glasgow City Council had reviewed the pension auto-enrolment position and advised that there was no need for an RO to auto-enrol staff on election duties as long as work is for less than three months.</p> <p>MMc stated that the E-Counting project had not been short-listed for the Civil Service Awards, however, AON stated that the #ReadytoVote campaign had won Silver in the UK National Public Awareness category of the Public-Sector Awards.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Electoral Commission Update</p>	<p>MC described the series of reports covering different themes which the Electoral Commission is publishing, e.g. SLGE, Welsh Council, Electoral Registration, Voter Experience of Elections. The next report will cover accessibility as there is a known need to work more with those with disabilities and with political parties.</p> <p>MC reported that all ROs in Scotland met the standards for both 2017 elections. In November, the EC will publish a report on standing for election from the candidate’s point of view. The EC is also working on how to communicate finance which will be part of a larger report in January.</p> <p>On the 26 January 2018, the EC will hold a seminar with the Stevenson’s Trust (part of Glasgow University) about The Future of Elections. This will then feed into the Scottish Government’s Electoral Reform consultation. MMc grateful to AON and his team for this. All EMB members are invited to attend the seminar.</p> <p>MC gave an update on the Modernising Guidance project. Dr. Sweetenham has now met the stakeholders and is working on the recommendations based on her findings. It is hoped that Dr. Sweetenham will return to the next EMB meeting in January 2018 with an update on the project. User Groups have also been set up which parties in Scotland will be invited to attend.</p> <p>There was mention of the review of the SPPPP which will lead to interested parties being asked</p>	

<p>5.0</p>	<p>Scotland Office/Cabinet Office Update</p>	<p>No update at meeting but since the EMB meeting Alastair Noble from the Scotland Office has contacted the Cabinet Office for any updates. The Cabinet Office didn't think there were any updates to provide to the EMB – they felt that members would already be familiar with the work they were doing from other events e.g. the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) meetings and the Electoral Commission's working group.</p> <p>The Cabinet Office has engaged with various EMB members about registration issues in other forums but if there are outstanding questions/concerns then EMB to contact Lee Pope at the Cabinet Office (lee.pope@cabinetoffice.gov.uk).</p> <p>PW would like an update on Voter ID pilots.</p> <p>ACTION: FC to request Cabinet Office updates via Scotland Office before next EMB meeting (if no representatives in attendance).</p>	<p>FC</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Electoral Registration Update</p>	<p>PW reported that canvas is ongoing and submission rates are similar to those from last year. Online return rates seem to have plateaued at 30-35%.</p> <p>PW explained the ongoing discussions with Universities Scotland about student registration. PW and KC due to attend a meeting to discuss why the Sheffield model is less popular as it enables a student to register to vote at the same time that they enrol.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Joint EMB/Police Scotland Seminar</p>	<p>The 'Moving to Critical' seminar will take place at Tulliallan Police College on 28 November 2017. Draft agenda issued for discussion (afternoon sessions will be table top exercises designed to stretch everyone's thinking).</p> <p>Table plan is to sit attendees in geographical areas, i.e. place corresponding RO/ERO/SPOC/Local Authority employees together on same table. AON, MC, Sue Bruce and Claire Bassett will be in attendance from the Electoral Commission.</p>	

		<p>The next planning meeting will take place on 16 November – PW and AON to also attend. ACTION: CH to find out whether all SPOCs attending. ACTION: Further work to be carried out on the afternoon scenarios with Police Scotland.</p>	<p>CH CH</p>
8.0	EMB Work Programme	<p>CH confirmed that lessons had been learned from the e-counting project and a meeting, hosted by Scottish Government, will take place on 18 January 2018. It was agreed that EROs should be involved earlier in the process than previously so PW will be invited to attend the meeting in January as well as User Groups. Future planning for e-counting events required as planning cycle takes three years.</p>	
9.0	EC Report on Local Government Elections & EMB Recommendations	<p>It was noted that a key recommendation was the need to lobby for EMB status, extending the remit formally to cover all statutory elections.</p>	
10.0	EMB Financial Statement	<p>EMB financial statement reviewed briefly and noted.</p>	
11.0	EMB Annual Report	<p>CH informed the Board that it is a requirement to lay an Annual Report before Parliament and the current draft for 2016/17 is almost ready. Falkirk Council will be providing the graphics and printing once complete.</p> <p>PW raised the point that the draft annual report is currently light on Electoral Registration (page 15 implies a pause in registration activity). ACTION: CH to include additional paragraph about registration.</p>	<p>CH</p>
12.0	SAA Response to Registration Review Measures	<p>PW stated that the SAA response includes a note that as there will be more anonymous electors to deal with in the future, polling station staff need to be fully aware of the process. There is a need to get the attestation form correct.</p>	

13.0	Improving Access to Voting for the Visually Impaired	<p>CH attended and presented at the Cross Party Working Group meeting which was held on 12 September. The Electoral Commission submitted written evidence for the meeting. CH stated that there was a discussion about the use of the tactile voting device in polling stations and the need to consider voting for the visually impaired when considering the modernisation of voting in the future.</p> <p>It was noted that the Cabinet Office Consultation covers general accessibility information and is due to close on 10 November.</p>	
14.0	Local Government Committee RO Fees	<p>Following a Twitter feed the week before the EMB meeting, CH had noted that MP had suggested that a generic response could be prepared by SOLACE.</p>	
15.0	Electoral Summit with the Minister for the Constitution	<p>A Summit is being held on 11 December (9.30am-2pm) covering the challenges of the electoral system (registration will be covered in the morning and elections in the afternoon) in London. Attendees will include SOLACE, SAA, AEA, EMB, EC and the Cabinet Office. CH, PW, KC will attend.</p> <p>A discussion took place about Democracy Week 2018 (possibly during w/c 1st July). MMc stated that events will be taking place across Scotland that week due to the anniversary of the Suffragette movement so asked whether there would be a better week to hold Democracy Week, e.g. Feb/March? ACTION: EMB to let MMc know of any alternative date suggestions.</p>	ALL
16.0	Prisoner Voting Evidence Session	<p>The Equalities and Human Rights Committee held an evidence session on prisoner voting on 7 September which CH and PW attended and thought was interesting.</p>	
17.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	<p>PW and CH (by video) will attend the ERRWG and Suppliers Meeting in London on 9 November.</p>	

18.0	Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel	<p>The last SPPPP meeting took place on 19 October 2017. PW stated that there had been a discussion about unique numbers by the political parties and whether they were entitled to it. They also raised handling attainers for registers.</p> <p>DM raised point that the new GDPR regulations which will be introduced next year will affect the forms recruiting elections staff so ROs need to be aware of this.</p>	
19.0	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CH confirmed that he will meet MP on a monthly basis to discuss matters arising. • Group agreed that the current clash of electoral event dates needs addressed (SPE). • GT stated that the revised proposals for Westminster constituencies have been published by the Boundary Commission. 	
20.0	Date of Next Meeting(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 January 2018 • 29 March 2018 • 24 May 2018 (under review due to ERO commitments) • 27 September 2018 • 29 November 2018 (under review due to ERO commitments) 	