ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND ACTION NOTE: Friday 22 April 2016, 10.30am CONFERENCE CALL

Present:

- Board Members: Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Malcolm Burr (MB RO), Pete Wildman (PW ERO), Roddy Angus (RA Scottish Government), David Martin (DM RO), David Miller (DM DRO/AEA Rep), Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative), Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep)
- Advisers: Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Alex Mowat (AM Scottish Government), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Rebecca Whyte (RW Scottish Government), Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison), Mette Christensen (MC Electoral Commission), Jonny Mitchell (Electoral Commission), Stuart Matheson (SM Scotland Office) Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO)
- In attendance: Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Fran Cattanach (FC Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION
1.0/	Admin/Note of Previous	Apologies	
2.0	Meeting/Matters arising	Andrew Kerr (AK RO)	
	etc	Sally Loudon (SL RO)	
		Rachel Irvine (RI Scotland Office)	
		 Joan Hewton (JH ERO) 	
		Elma Murray (EM RO)	
		Louise Scott (LS Scottish Government)	
		New Board Member Gillian Taylor was welcomed as replacement for Gordon Blair, DRO/SOLAR representative.	
		MP thanked everyone for giving up their valuable time.	



		Note of Previous Meeting (26 Feb 2016) & Matters Arising	
		The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3.0	Scottish Parliament Elections 5 May 2016	Update from Scottish Government	
		RA reported that threat of Royal Mail strike in Edinburgh area. CH gave update that Julie Peroni has said that the SPE shouldn't be affected. ACTION : CH seeking clarification and whether any danger for EU Referendum.	СН
		CH stated that confusion between shifts at some Royal Mail sorting offices had resulted in low delivery rates on 21/4, e.g. Lothian, Borders, Perth & Kinross and Angus. Rachel Wyndham from Royal Mail has apologised and another delivery was expected at 3pm on 22/4. ACTION : CH to check all deliveries to LA's are as expected.	СН
		No delivery problems in Glasgow but DM informed group that there is currently a local formal dispute in schools. All schools should be open as normal but Cordia staff currently on strike (approx 75% of Glasgow's polling places are schools). ACTION : DM to inform Board if dispute continues.	DM
		Update from Electoral Commission	
		Majority of resources are published. MC confirmed that doubtful placemats would be published on 22/4 or 25/4. ACTION : MC to send email when placemats available.	МС
		Registration phase has been completed and Voter Information Guide has gone out to households and promoted on Facebook. Animated video also available. MP received positive feedback on registration campaign.	
		Report on SPE will be published on 7/9. AON reminded Board that wash-up meeting on 19/5 has been cancelled. Not many EC Observers will be out on Day of Poll. The tracking on the public awareness has started and the tracking on the Public Opinion will start 7/8 May 2016. ERO survey will be sent out on 9 May 2016.	



EMB Update	
Royal Mail Sweep – ACTION: CH to find out whether there has been progress on getting the contract signed off nationally (sweeps will go ahead regardless). Double payments need avoided so Board advised to ensure not on invoices. RA enquired whether Scottish Government could pay but EMB sign the contract.	СН
Signature Verification Training – very well received and a lot of positive feedback received. Glasgow City Council was thanked for hosting the training session.	
Adjudication of Doubtful Votes – consistency with previous practice required. CH confirmed that ballot papers should be rejected if voters put a 2 or 3 (not a 1). This is not in the guidance but is normal practice. Papers should be rejected if missing an official mark or UIN. The absence of either of these will render the paper invalid. Any missing UIN should be picked up when packing polling crates or by polling staff. Any missing official marks are a proofing issue from the printers. ACTION: Electoral Commission to clarify this and CH to email confirmation.	СН
Electoral Integrity	
Guidelines on Personation are with Electoral Commission's lawyers for comment. Police need a warrant or Court Order to remove papers as they are the property of the RO. ACTION : CH to circulate when available.	СН
Registration Issues	
There has been a positive impact from the Electoral Commission campaign on the registration process. There has also been a significant decrease in registration issues. The level of duplication has not been analysed yet. ACTION : IM to send electorate data to Royal Mail per constituency. IM to send -5 electorate data to CH for circulation for regional seat allocation. Discussion took place about whether it is possible to provide data on how many 16/17 year olds have registered and as a percentage.	IM



		 ACTION: IM to consider how to provide this as keen interest from media as well as Scottish Government but there is no definite database available by age and residency. ACTION: AON requested discussion with EROs regarding the numbers to be given for media release for public interest a few days before SPE. ACTION: IM to inform AON about the level of duplicate registrations. 	IM
		EUR booklet available from 21 May 2016 onwards. IM suggested a public awareness message about the fact that once you are registered you stay registered (unless you change address).	
4.0	EU Referendum	Update from Electoral Commission	
	23 June 2016	CCO Approach/Directions	
		Guidelines have been circulated to COs as well as a survey which all COs had completed. EURMB due to take place w/c 9 May so MP will circulate any relevant information.	
		Public Awareness	
		Similar creative will be used to that of SPE 2016. Voter information and registration phases will be similar to those of SIR 2014. Vote Information flyer will be set out w/c 16 May. Overseas voter campaign underway with deadline for registration of 16 May.	
		"Purdah"	
		CH stated that a fact sheet has been published on Public Bodies which has been distributed to all Chief Executives. Discussion about the need to emphasise to SOLACE members what is and what is not purdah. Agreement that rules should apply at all times and for consistency to use Notice of Referendum rather than guidance from SOLACE. ACTION : MB to put something out from SOLACE Scotland and circulate to all COs and EMB Board.	MB



State of preparedness of CO Teams	
All teams obviously have main focus on SPE. Polling station handbook will be available by 23 May. ACTION: MC will inform all when available on website.	МС
Work has been completed on draft Performance Management Framework and will be circulated after SPE2016.	
Electoral Commission Results Collation System & Rehearsal	
Blank version of Scottish regional template for Glasgow and one other LA being used to update system. DMcG awaiting reply from Electoral Commission. Next test will take place on 24 May (9pm – midnight).	
Regional Count Collation Centre	
ACTION: MP to decide where to make announcements for turnout for Scotland and Scottish result.	MP
Fees and Guidance	
Awaiting fees guidance from Cabinet Office. Finance will pay late April and are in the process of clarifying bank account details.	
Ballot Paper	
With respect to Official / Security Mark, it has been clarified that an abstract symbol required.	
There was a question as to whether a new Tactile Voting Device was needed for the EU Referendum. ACTION: PakFlatt option to be explored by SG.	SG



		Registration Issues	
		IM confirmed that on track to write out to rejected postal voters from 16 May. Data needed from ROs at close of poll in order to do this. In March, the Second Interim Notice of Alteration was agreed for 3 June 2016 which will be common across Scotland. It was stated that there will be some unhappy overseas electors who will not receive their postal votes in time to be returned by 23 June 2016.	
5.0	Scottish Local Government Elections 2017	E-Counting 2017 Update from DMcG (circulated) MP encouraged nominations from any EMB member or colleague who is interested in joining e-Counting Project as replacement for Sally Loudon.	
6.0	Other Electoral Events/ Issues	DM made Board aware that there may be several by-elections in Glasgow area following SPE. IM suggested considering the extension of vacancy window to 6 months.	
7.0	General Electoral Registration Issues	Law Commission Interim Report Report published 4 Feb. Scottish Government aware of it and confirmed that there would be no formal response until after EUR. Working Group confirmed that they had looked at recommendations at last meeting and that it will be kept on agenda. ACTION: EMB to send response to First Minister and Westminster after EUR.	МР/СН
8.0	EMB Role and Resources	EMB Financial Statement DMcG reported that statement as at 31 March not ready yet. Small under spend which MMc agreed could be carried forward.	
9.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	EAB/EURMB MP will be attending teleconference meeting on 18 May and weekly thereafter until	



		EUR. It was noted that attendees from any meetings are disseminating any relevant information to members.		
10.0	Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel	No issues to note.		
11.0	АОВ	Vacancy for EMB		
		Sally Loudon has resigned from the EMB so MP will begin recruitment process. ACTION : MP to reply to resignation letter thanking Sally for her contribution. MP will ask for interest at next SOLACE meeting. ACTION : MB to add to SOLACE agenda.	MP MB	
12.0	Date of Next Meeting	27 May 2016		
	Date of future meetings: 27 May 2016, 26 August 2016 and 30 September 2016			