

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND ACTION NOTE: Friday 27 May 2016, 2pm Chief Executive's Board Room Waverley Court, East Market Street Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Present:

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Malcolm Burr (MB RO), Pete Wildman (PW ERO), Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative), Gillian Taylor (GT DRO/SOLAR rep), Elma Murray (EM RO)
- Advisers: Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission), Maria McCann (MMc Scottish Government), Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison), Jonny Mitchell (Electoral Commission), David Miller (DM DRO/AEA Rep)
- 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	Rachel Irvine (RI Scotland Office)	
		 Stuart Matheson (SM Scotland Office) 	
		 Joan Hewton (JH ERO) 	
		 Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO) 	
		 Roddy Angus (RA Scottish Government) 	
		David Martin (DM RO)	
		 Rebecca Whyte (RW Scottish Government) 	
		Mette Christensen (MC Electoral Commission)	
		Note of Previous Meeting (22 April 2016) & Matters Arising	
		The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.	



3.0	Scottish Parliament	Feedback from SPE 2016:	
	Elections 5 May 2016	Electoral Registration – EC messaging on information booklet was very good. There were no real issues with emergency proxies or absent voters. EROs reported that 75% of clerical errors were due to not having date of birth data. ACTION : IM to write to AON about this matter.	IM
		Pre-polling day – preparations appear to have gone smoothly.	
		Postal Voting - MP stated that the point was made to the SPPPP that there were rejected votes due to date of births missing or being incorrect (the refresh only asks for a signature not a date of birth). Many errors due to today's date being added to DOB box so parties have requested a review of the design of the date on the PV statements. DM reported that he has had to deal with angry voters who won't be able to return their PV from overseas in time for EUR. ACTION : GT to contact Australian Mail regarding UK deadlines for electoral events.	GT
		Provisionally rejected PVs are high as had no PVS with them – it was stated that this is a voter information issue and EROs will report this. ACTION : AON to highlight this through EC.	AON
		Integrity Issues – DM reported two cases of Personation in Glasgow and that the Police might be interested in one of them. EM reported one incident of Personation plus one man voting twice. ACTION : CH to raise with Calum Glenny (CG) in case it can aid future police training. CH to have meeting with CG if necessary and enquire as to SPOC cover if usual SPOC on annual leave. EC and Crown Office to be involved.	СН
		Polling day – DM reported that although 100 janitors were on strike in Glasgow areas, there were no official pickets at polling stations by UNISON and only one unofficial picket.	
		The Count – Discussion about the variety of wording used for the declarations and the	



Board agreed that a consistent script is required across all authorities. There was also inconsistency of backdrops and announcements. Since there is no budget towards this then MMc to take suggestion back to Scottish Government that budget is given, for example for media training. It was also suggested that the EMB produces a factsheet for each RO for future events and perhaps offers national training. ACTION : DMcG to email Group the EUR certificate and declaration from the national collation system.	MMc DMcG
Board agreed that no concern with the Gaelic/English announcements in Highlands & Islands.	
EM reported ICT issues on the night but these were managed well. It was reported that in some areas postals held up proceedings but increasing staff numbers to cope with this may not be possible due to constraints of size of hall, e.g. in the Borders. It was noted that some finishing time estimates were later than planned.	
Royal Mail – EM reported that sweep had not been very successful for her as many PVs received morning after the Count. ACTION : CH to highlight frustrating issues to Rachel at Royal Mail again (it was noted that some votes will have been posted too late).	СН
Campaigning issues & campaign material – no issues to report.	
Campaign expenditure – no issues to report.	
Commission guidance – It was stated that some parts of the EC guidance were late so AON apologised for this.	
General -	
EM stated that there may potentially be no boats for the EUR so EM to let AON know whether he can help with this issue if it arises. Discussion about the dangers of satellite counts and whether helicopters could be used. MB added that tenders for air	



		services are coming down in price so it may no longer be prohibitively expensive.	
		MMc on behalf of the Scottish Government thanked everyone and their teams for all of their hard work and the success of the procedural side of the election.	
		FOI's – Board agreed that ROs are not subject to FOI requests and any enquiries with respect to RO fees should be referred to the Fees and Charges Order.	
		Fees – It was agreed that it was a local issue whether RO fees were paid with a 75%/25% split or 100% in one payment. DM stated that there was lack of clarity in the legislation.	
4.0	EU Referendum	Update from Electoral Commission	
	23 June 2016	AON stated that most of the EC Guidance is available (some is not yet available as being translated into Welsh). AON reported that there are 93 campaigners for EUR so far. The EC will write to campaigners on 31/5. For information in Scotland, Frank Roy is heading up 'Remain' campaign, and Tom Harris is heading the 'Leave' campaign. SNP will appoint 32 agents.	
		Public Awareness (handout circulated by JM).	
		IM stated that, at short notice, 2 EROs received funding from the Cabinet Office to promote registration which had to be spent by 26/5. CO can spend it but not EROs. DM reported an increase in the number of overseas voter applications in his area.	
		State of preparedness of CO Teams	
		Deadline for Performance Management Framework and for samples was 27/5. DMcG reported that two COs were not intending to do mini-counts but they will now comply with CCO direction.	



Electoral Commission Results Collation System & Rehearsal	
Discussion about recent rehearsal where there was a system configuration problem. Some confusion reported about who should be pressing the Declaration Made button. It was agreed that the RCO could do it if the results had been manually phoned in. DMcG circulated a summary of the feedback received to date which has been sent to EC. Further feedback can be completed via EC survey by 1 June. ACTION : COs to complete survey by 1 June. Board agreed that suitable internal checks need to be in place to ensure accuracy of result reporting. MP stated that another rehearsal may happen but not in venue and not at night. There is also a need to update contact numbers for users. ACTION : DMcG to distribute updated guidance plus distribute contingency template.	COs DMcG
Regional Count Collation Centre	
MP informed Group that she will attend her own Count and then attend Regional Collation from Grangemouth Sports Centre. Therefore, media attendance in Grangemouth will now be greater than normal.	
Fees and Guidance	
No issues to report.	
Registration Issues	
IM stated that EROs are working on the rejected PV letters from SPE. IM stated that the eligible electorate from First Notice of Alteration is 3.942 million (of which 12,000 are overseas but does not include service voters). EROs have completed some work which has resulted in knowing that 40% of people living overseas have no arrangement to vote. Registration application volumes across GB have increased	
significantly since SPE. IM stated that final electorate will be at E-5. ACTION : IM to send MMc, CH and AON electorate figures by local authority.	IM

		PW acknowledged the shortness of time between E-5 (15/16 June) and the weekend where registers are needed by teams in order to complete crate packing for polling stations.	
		SOLACE Guidance on Council Publicity	
		MB reported that guidance has been updated by everyone and the updated version is now available.	
		Briefing Event for Campaigners/Agents	
		Discussion about whether enough demand for an event due to current numbers. It was noted that some COs may brief individually not collectively if numbers remain low.	
5.0	Scottish Local Government Elections	E-Counting 2017 Update from DMcG (circulated)	
	2017	DMcG stated that a useful meeting was held with Legals from Falkirk and Glasgow about call-off agreements and contracts. DMcG stated that it will be helpful to have one document with the terms and conditions within it. Testing continues using 140,000 ballot papers and it was reported that a date is to be fixed date soon for the mock trial in Perth. A wider stakeholder event may take place in March 2017. The Conduct Order will go out to Consultation and DMcG requested that one document is sent out rather than several Orders with amendments.	
6.0	Other Electoral Events/ Issues	Currently there will be a fallow year in 2018, however, there will be boundary consultation work. MMc agreed to keep EMB updated and aware of timescales regarding the note about community empowerment and Community Council elections in the SNP manifesto. EROs requested changes to polling plans by 1 st December 2016 in preparation for Local Government elections in May 2017.	

7.0	EMB Role and Resources	EMB Financial Statement DMcG reported that statement will be distributed, and confirmed that a grant offer for the current year had been received from MMc.		
8.0	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	No issues to note.		
9.0	Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel	No issues to note regarding SPE 2016. It was noted that the Panel was happy with the information received from count venues.		
10.0	АОВ	 ACTION: Boundary Consultation to be added to agenda for next meeting. Vacancy on EMB Board & e-Counting Project – Board agreed that MP can decide from current nominations in order to fill post by July. Community Councils – there appears to be a variety of approaches to elections and their funding. EUR notification of totals –there was a discussion about there being one declaration which will be published Council-wide. ACTION: CH to raise this with EC and report back to EMB. MP wished everyone good luck with the EUR. 	FC CH	
11.0	Date of Next Meeting	26 August 2016		
	Date of future meetings: 26 August 2016 and 30 September 2016			