

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR SCOTLAND

ACTION NOTE: Tuesday 14 April 2015, 3:15pm

Chief Executive's Board Room

Waverley Court, East Market Street

EDINBURGH EH8 8BG

Present:

- **Board Members:** Mary Pitcaithly (MP Convener & RO), Joan Hewton (JH ERO), David Thomson (DT ERO), David Martin (DM RO)
- **Advisers:** Roddy Angus (RA Scotland Office), Gordon Blair (GB, DRO SOLAR representative) David Miller (DM DRO, AEA Rep), Dougie McGregor (DMcG e-Counting Local Government Liaison), Louise Unwin (LU Scottish Government)
- **In attendance:** Chris Highcock (CH Secretary to the Board DRO), Ros Wilson (RW Administrator)

		NOTE	ACTION / RESPONSIBLE
1	Admin /Note of Previous Meeting/ Matters arising etc	<p>Apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malcolm Burr (MB RO) • Sue Bruce (SB RO) • Stuart Galloway (SG DRO/ERO) • Ian Milton (IM ERO SAA representative) • Andy O'Neill (AON Electoral Commission) <p>Note of Previous Meeting (10 March) & Matters Arising The Action Note was accepted as an accurate record of the meeting subject to Item 5. It was agreed to change "canvass" to "progress" before the summer recess.</p>	
2	SIR – Devolution (Further Powers) Committee	It was noted the EMB had given evidence on the Scottish Independence Referendum to the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee which was well received. A discussion took place on how rules within schools should be applied	

		<p>to ensure that 16 and 17 year old voters are able to discuss political issues with teaching staff.</p> <p>MP advised that GROS were publishing their statistics on Thursday.</p>	
3	Registration Update Including IER	<p>Poll Cards: It was noted that Polling Cards had been sent out.</p> <p>JH advised that costs indicated by Halrose to update the system to accommodate 16/17 year olds were higher than expected. It was noted that funding from the Cabinet Office would not be available until March 2016. LU advised that the Scottish Government would be writing a strongly worded letter to them. It was agreed that EROs should ensure that ROs were aware of this. MP agreed to bring this up at SOLACE Meeting next week.</p> <p>It was noted the EU had voiced concerns that not enough was being done by the Cabinet Office to register UK nationals living overseas. RA advised that the Cabinet Office were sending out information to ex-pats and in response there was an increase of requests for Postal Votes for Overseas and BFPO addresses.</p>	SG
4	UK Parliamentary General Election 7 May 2015	<p>Nominations: It was noted that no challenges were received. It was also noted that EC issued changes to logos at the last minute and printers received these in adequate time to make changes to the ballot papers.</p> <p>Count: It was noted that the Electoral Commission's material on how a count works did not include information on spoilt papers. It was agreed that CH would make comments to them about this.</p> <p>Media: It was agreed to be more pro-active in briefing the media at the count. David Martin advised that he had a meeting with SKY and that he had instructed them on the standard of behaviour required.</p>	CH

		<p>Electoral Commission: Update It was noted that the EC were collating Count Start/Finish times.</p> <p>EC Guidance Note on (A)RO's Fee A discussion took place on the paper circulated by the EC. MP read the minutes from the EAB on the subject. It was agreed that CH would make comments on behalf of the EMB.</p> <p>Finance – Fees and Charges from Cabinet Office: RA advised the guidance is ready but the forms have yet to be issued. It was noted that issues regarding RO Fees for 2017 have yet to be picked up by SOLACE/CoSLA.</p> <p>Contingency Planning: It was noted that if a Government could not be formed on 7 May ROs should be prepared for further elections in 2015.</p> <p>Police Guidance: Jim Baird advised that Police Scotland's own assessment was that there was no intelligence to suggest a threat at the UKPGE. A discussion took place on the role of Local SPOCS in connection with PO's at polling places. CH advised that he and AON were meeting JB on Friday and would take all comments back to him.</p>	<p>CH</p>
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5	Scottish Parliamentary Election 5 May 2016	<p>Scottish Elections (Reduction in Voting Age) Bill LU advised that the Scottish Elections (Reduction in Voting Age) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 2 April 2015.</p>	
6	eCounting for 2107 Local Government Elections	<p>e-Counting Project 2017 – Update LU advised that meetings had take place with potential suppliers, stakeholders and groups with disabilities regarding the possibility of introducing an element of rotation to the ballot paper. A paper was submitted to the Minister for Local Government and Local Empowerment. It was noted that MP and CH had a meeting with the Minister and advised he was well informed on the administrative and practical issues. It was noted that the Scottish Government will keep the Board updated on the Ministers decision.</p>	
7	Other Electoral Events	<p>Potential UK Referendum on Europe It was noted that the governance of any potential European Referendum would likely be modelled on the approach used for the Scottish Referendum</p>	
8	Issues raised by Election Teams across Scotland	<p>Commonly Used Names It was agreed there was a need to tighten up criteria should this issue be revisited prior to the next election event.</p> <p>Display of Campaign Materials A discussion took place on display of campaign materials on council buildings and commercial leases. GB agreed to pass concerns onto SOLAR Elections Working Group.</p>	
9	EMB Role in context of further devolution	<p>The Devolution (Further Powers) Committee welcomed the recommendation of the Electoral Commission and their approach in being open to considering changes to the remit and funding of the EMB and any impact this may have on</p>	

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		the functions of the Electoral Commission in Scotland. The Committee saw merit in reassessing the role status and funding of the Board and requested the view of Scottish Ministers. AON to update at next meeting.	AON
10	EMB Resources	It was noted that the EMB is funded on an event by event basis and is heavily subsidised by the City of Edinburgh Council.	
11	Regional Returning Officers' Group and associated meetings	Scottish Political Parties Panel CH advised that there has been discussion of proposals for rotation on local government ballot papers.	
12	AOB	Electoral Commission: It was noted that there was a vacancy for the position of Commissioner. EMB 2014 Annual Report It was noted that a draft report of the 2014 EMB Annual Report was available. MP thanked CH and Caroline Binnie for their contributions.	
13	Date of Next Meeting	29 May 2015	
Date of future Meetings : 26 June, 31 July, 28 August, 25 September, 30 October, 27 November			