

From: [FOI](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 47/17 Electronic voting, electronic vote counting and online voting Response
Date: 24 May 2017 18:48:04
Attachments: [eCounting Potential Training Numbers Edinburgh.xlsx](#)
[Scottish Government eCounting 2017 Returning Officer Factsheet Re-Counts.pdf](#)
[eCounting Project 2017 Training Schedule.pdf](#)
[Scottish Government eCounting 2017 Draft QandA.pdf](#)
[The City of Edinburgh Council Election Guidance on Count Procedures for Candidates and Election Agents and Counting Agents.pdf](#)

Dear [REDACTED],

Our Ref: FOI 47/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **25 April 2017**.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

You have requested:

(1) A list of documents you hold relating to electronic voting, electronic vote counting and online voting, produced in the last two years

(2) A list of meetings that have taken place in the last year between officials and external parties on the topics of electronic voting, electronic vote counting and online voting, including details of officials and the topics discussed

Relating to item (2) I am particularly interested in meetings with:

(a) The Electoral Commission, local councils and the devolved administrations such as the Greater London Assembly and Mayors office.

(b) Campaign organisations, lobby groups and commercial organisations providing equipment and software, such as:

**Accenture
AccuPoll
Advanced Voting Solutions
Avante
Brähler
Election Systems and Software
Electoral Reform Services
Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) Everyone Counts Follow My
Vote iMeta Technologies Intercivic Inkavote MicroVote Nedap Premier
Election Solutions, formerly Diebold Populex Quest Saber SafeVote ScytI
Sequoia Voting Systems
Smartmatic
Triad Election Systems
TruVote**

UniLect
WebRootsDemocracy
Verizon
VoteHere
Vote-PAD
Voting Technologies International

We have identified that we hold information which is relevant to your request, and our response is as follows:

(1) A list of documents you hold relating to electronic voting, electronic vote counting and online voting, produced in the last two years

Electronic counting

We have identified the following documents produced in the last two years:

[Electoral Commission/London Elects guidance for Returning Officers on verifying and counting the votes at the 5 May 2016 Greater London Authority elections](#)

[Electoral Commission report on the administration of the 5 May 2016 Greater London Authority elections](#)

The City of Edinburgh Council Election: Guidance on Count Procedures for Candidates, Election Agents and Counting Agents (attached as a PDF).

Scottish Government, Elections Scotland, idox, CGI: E-counting at the 2017 Scottish local government elections, Returning Officer factsheet on recounts (attached as a PDF)

Scottish Government, Elections Scotland, idox, CGI: draft Q&A (attached as a PDF).

Scottish e-counting project 2017: Training schedule for February/March 2017 (attached as a PDF).

Scottish e-counting project 2017: estimated staff numbers for all authorities (attached as an Excel file).

You may wish to note that documents relating to the use of electronic counting for Scottish local government elections, including a [training guide](#) and recent [e-counting bulletins](#) along with minutes of the Electoral Management Board meetings where electronic counting may have been discussed are available on the Elections Scotland website: <http://www.electionsscotland.info/>

The London Assembly's Election Review Panel also produced a [report](#) on the May 2016 Greater London Authority elections, which includes analysis of the use of electronic counting.

Although falling outside the scope of the Freedom of Information request, the following documents, relating to the Commission's evaluation of electronic counting pilot schemes in 2006 and 2007, may be of interest:

[May 2006 electronic counting pilot schemes: summary of Electoral Commission findings](#)

[May 2007 electronic counting pilot schemes: summary of Electoral Commission findings](#)

Electronic voting, including online voting

We have identified the following documents produced in the last two years:

[May 2017 Parliament of Victoria Electoral Matters Committee Inquiry into Electronic Voting](#)

Although falling outside the scope of the Freedom of Information request, the following documents may be of interest:

[May 2007 electronic voting pilot schemes: summary of Electoral Commission findings](#)

[February 2014 British Columbia Independent Panel Report on Internet Voting](#)

[October 2014 Electoral Commission response to Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy Inquiry into Electronic Voting](#)

(2) A list of meetings that have taken place in the last year between officials and external parties on the topics of electronic voting, electronic vote counting and online voting, including details of officials and the topics discussed.

Meetings with:

(a) The Electoral Commission, local councils and the devolved administrations such as the Greater London Assembly and Mayors office.

Meetings with Greater London Authority

19 January 2017

Meeting concerning 2020 Greater London Authority elections, including electronic counting

Attendees: Ailsa Irvine (Electoral Commission), Adrian Green (Electoral Commission), Tom Hawthorn (Electoral Commission), Mark Roberts (Greater London Authority), Ruth Morgan (Greater London Authority)

Meetings with Electoral Management Board for Scotland

26 August 2016

28 October 2016

25 November 2016

27 January 2017

24 February 2017

30 March 2017

21 April 2017

These meetings included updates on the use of e-counting at the May 2017 local government elections.

Attendees included representatives from the [Electoral Management Board for Scotland](#) and its [advisers](#).

(b) Campaign organisations, lobby groups and commercial organisations providing equipment and software, such as:

Accenture
AccuPoll
Advanced Voting Solutions
Avante
Brähler
Election Systems and Software
Electoral Reform Services
Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) Everyone Counts Follow My Vote
iMeta Technologies Intercivic Inkavote MicroVote Nedap Premier Election
Solutions, formerly Diebold Populex Quest Saber SafeVote ScytI
Sequoia Voting Systems
Smartmatic
Triad Election Systems
TruVote
UniLect
WebRootsDemocracy
Verizon
VoteHere
Vote-PAD
Voting Technologies International

Electoral Commission officials have had no meetings with the campaign organisations, lobby groups and commercial organisations listed above.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Senior Information and Knowledge Adviser

The Electoral Commission

3 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8YZ

FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

electoralcommission.org.uk

yourvotematters.co.uk

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Blog](#)

e-Counting Project 2017

Estimated staff numbers for all authorities

LA Name	Total Papers to Count (Est)	Number of ballot boxes (Est)	Reg / Ver			Scanning				Adjudication			Reserves			Election Manager	Returning Officer	Total
			Marshall	Operator	Supervisor	Marshall	Operator	Supervisor	Scanning Manager	Operator	Supervisor	Investigation Marshall	Marshall	Operator	Investigator/Supervisor			
Aberdeen City	77,330	258	3	3	1	3	10	3	1	16	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	51
Aberdeenshire	99,115	331	4	3	1	3	12	3	1	18	2	1	1	4	1	1	2	57
Angus	46,828	157	2	2	1	2	6	2	1	10	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	34
Argyll and Bute	41,048	137	2	2	1	2	6	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	32
Clackmannanshire	20,387	68	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	6	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	24
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	14,661	49	1	2	1	1	4	1	1	6	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	25
Dumfries and Galloway	65,908	220	3	3	1	3	9	3	1	14	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	48
Dundee City	55,819	187	2	3	1	2	8	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	41
East Ayrshire	49,841	167	2	3	1	2	7	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	40
East Dunbartonshire	48,633	163	2	3	1	2	7	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	40
East Lothian	45,071	151	2	2	1	2	6	2	1	10	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	34
East Renfrewshire	43,066	144	2	2	1	2	6	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	32
Edinburgh, City of	200,361	668	7	6	1	6	24	6	2	32	3	1	2	7	2	1	4	104
Falkirk	60,005	201	3	3	1	2	8	2	1	14	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	45
Fife	145,039	484	5	3	1	4	14	4	1	26	3	1	1	5	1	1	2	72
Glasgow City	209,107	698	7	9	1	8	30	8	2	36	3	1	2	8	2	1	6	124
Highland	99,209	331	4	3	1	4	13	4	1	18	2	1	1	4	1	1	2	60
Inverclyde	33,742	113	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	31
Midlothian	35,506	119	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	31
Moray	36,083	121	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	31
North Ayrshire	55,831	187	2	3	1	2	8	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	41
North Lanarkshire	128,994	430	5	3	1	4	16	4	1	22	2	1	1	5	1	1	2	69
Orkney Islands	10,862	37	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
Perth and Kinross	64,828	217	3	3	1	3	9	3	1	14	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	48
Renfrewshire	71,415	239	3	3	1	3	9	3	1	14	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	48
Scottish Borders	49,682	166	2	3	1	2	7	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	40
Shetland Islands	12,035	41	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
South Ayrshire	51,243	171	2	3	1	2	7	2	1	12	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	40
South Lanarkshire	127,985	427	5	3	1	4	16	4	1	22	2	1	1	5	1	1	2	69
Stirling	37,974	127	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	31
West Dunbartonshire	36,275	121	2	2	1	2	5	2	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	31
West Lothian	73,266	245	3	3	1	3	9	3	1	16	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	50
Total	2,147,149	7,175	89	92	32	84	285	84	34	430	48	32	34	98	34	32	57	1,465

Numbers for Edinburgh - Total

74 77 26 70 239 70 28 362 39 26 28 83 28 26 48 1,224

RETURNING OFFICER FACTSHEET: RE-COUNTS

1. This paper is for use by Returning Officers where a Re-count is considered appropriate.

2. It is, of course, for the RO to decide when and in what circumstances to determine there should be a Re-count of votes. The main circumstances where a Re-count may be requested or indicated are:

- Where a candidate or agent is not satisfied about the conduct and/or accuracy of the count or count process.
- If the result of the contest is particularly close i.e. with only a few votes separating successful/unsuccessful candidates. However, if the Returning Officer is content that the correct processes have been followed and each part of the process has been sufficiently scrutinised, then a close result should not of itself be a valid reason for a full re-count of the votes.
- If there is an incident with the eCounting system during a Count e.g. a power failure. However, there are processes in place to recover the eCounting system safely, which are intended to avoid the need for a Re-count in most circumstances. ROs are advised to consult their Count Centre Manager and Technical Manager before deciding whether a Re-count of any contests should be undertaken.

Re-count Process

3. Where a re-count of a specific contest is agreed to, it should be noted that this cannot be undertaken until:

- all other contests have been completed and results declared; and
- all contest reports and system reports have been run and the relevant data transferred to council's secure portable drives; and
- the eCounting system has been cleared of all data.

4. Once all these actions have been undertaken, the contest to be re-counted needs to be fully re-processed, e.g. registered, scanned, verified, adjudicated and counted again. If the same result is not obtained it may be necessary to perform more than one re-count of the same contest. The process for re-setting to eCounting system needs to be repeated for each re-count. All reports and data will be captured from both the original count and the re-count(s) and transferred to the secure portable drives once the count is completed.

Timings

5. It will take between 1 and 1.5 hours on average to prepare for a first re-count following completion of all other contests. Any additional re-counts will, on average, take 30 minutes to prepare.

eCounting Project Team



e-Counting Project 2017

Schedule for role-based training February/March 2017

Day and Date	Large Count Centre	Small Count Centre
Tuesday 21 February	Aberdeen	Moray
Wednesday 22 February	Aberdeenshire	Orkney
Thursday 23 February	Highland	Shetland
Monday 27 February	Glasgow (1)	Clackmannanshire
Tuesday 28 February	Dundee	Inverclyde
Wednesday 1 March		East Dunbartonshire
Thursday 2 March	West Lothian	East Lothian
Friday 3 March	Fife (1)	East Ayrshire
Monday 6 March	Glasgow (2)	Midlothian
Tuesday 7 March	Perth & Kinross	Argyll & Bute
Wednesday 8 March	City of Edinburgh (1)	East Renfrewshire
Thursday 9 March	South Ayrshire	Angus
Friday 10 March	Renfrewshire	West Dunbartonshire
Monday 13 March	City of Edinburgh (2)	Scottish Borders
Tuesday 14 March	North Lanarkshire	Stirling
Wednesday 15 March	South Lanarkshire	
Thursday 16 March	Fife (2)	
Friday 17 March	Falkirk	
Tuesday 21 March	Dumfries & Galloway	
Friday 24 March	North Ayrshire	

Authorities attending the Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen are highlighted in blue.

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Contact ::

ecountingsupport@cgi.com

[Tel: 0131 244 8338](tel:01312448338)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



COUNT DOWN TO eCOUNTING ON 5th MAY



Project Status Update: Summary

Introduction

1. **We are now just three weeks away from elections.** The e-counting project is proceeding well and everything that should be in place at this point is already delivered or on track:

- All Councils signed off their print proofs and printing is well underway.
- The Quality Checking process is up and running at the Lettershop premises and no issues have been raised so far.
- Lettershop and Idox will be working through the weekend to ensure that the printing continues to stay on track with the timetable.

2. The first of our short email updates reporting progress against **key milestones** was issued on 12 April.

Issue Resolution Centre

3. **If you need advice or additional information on any aspect of eCounting, please phone or email the Issue Resolution Centre (IRC)** – we are happy to help with all types of general questions as well as helping to resolve any problems that arise. **Please see the last page of this document or full contact details.**

Online Portal

4. Please don't forget that there is a lot of useful information and training material on the portal. You can access it by following this link:

<https://public.cgi.com/~ecounting2017/> and using the previously issued log-on information.

5. Most recently – and as mentioned by Chris Highcock in his email of 31 March – you will see that we have now posted an **e-Counting Reports Factsheet**. The factsheet is intended to provide some additional clarity of the suite of reports the e-counting system can produce and at what point these are best produced. You will find this factsheet by first clicking in the “Useful Resources” tab. Then, it can be found under the sub-heading ‘Factsheets’/ ‘Count Reports’



Candidate Nominations

6. Following the close of the Nominations period, on 29 March, the EMB's Dougie McGregor collected data from all councils. A summary of this can now be found on the EMB website. Many thanks to you all for providing this information so swiftly.

7. There will be 3 uncontested wards and these are in Argyll & Bute, Orkney and Shetland. The Electoral Commission will be providing guidance to ROs on how to deal with uncontested Wards.

8. The link below will take you to the relevant page of the EMB website where a summary of the nominations data has been uploaded.

[http://www.electionsscotland.info/downloads/download/104/scottish_local_government_elections - summary of candidates nominated](http://www.electionsscotland.info/downloads/download/104/scottish_local_government_elections_-_summary_of_candidates_nominated)

Project Status Update: Upcoming Dates - 1

PRINT CRITICAL DATES

Dispatch of 1st / 2nd Run Postal Ballot Packs

Please note that all postal packs have been dispatched from the printers (The Lettershop Group) to the Royal Mail, for delivery to electors on 1st April.

Final Upload of Data: Tuesday, 18 April (-11)

Data should be uploaded after 5.00 pm. Data reports must be signed-off as soon as the file has processed and you receive an alert from EasyPrint. Please note you must remain on standby until your file has processed and you have signed-off your data report. This is in case we require you to re-upload due to any errors after we have checked the files. Proofs will be available for sign-off on Wednesday, 19 April.

Postal CNLs

If you require an electronic copy of the postal CNLs, please contact your Print Controller who will arrange for a copy to be generated and made available for you to download from EasyPrint. For all the Councils that use Democracy Counts for postal vote checking, there will be a copy of the CNL available to download from EasyPrint for you to pass on. This file will contain all absent vote data that has been uploaded at that point.

For any queries about the above, please do not hesitate to contact your Print Controller or the Idox office on: Tel – 02871 371111.

POSTAL PACK ISSUE DATES

With thanks to Chris Highcock¹ (see his email of 7 April at 0954 hrs) please see the following table settling out key dates for the printing and distribution of postal voting packs

13 April	1 st issue of postal vote packs released by the printer to the Royal Mail (Postal vote applications from all validly registered electors received by 29 March 2017 will be included in this 1 st issue). This will represent the vast majority of all postal votes.
14 April	Royal Mail commence delivery of 1 st issue to electors. These packs will 'hit the letterbox' on 14 - 15 April
14 April	2nd issue of postal vote packs released by the printer to the Royal Mail (Postal vote applications from all validly registered electors received by 7 April 2017 will be included in this 2 nd issue).

¹ Thanks also to David Miller for advising of a couple of additional dates.

15 April	Royal Mail commence delivery of 2nd issue to electors. (There are no Royal Mail collections or deliveries on Monday 17 April – Easter Monday). These packs will 'hit the letterbox' on 15 -18 April.
25 April	Final issue of postal vote packs released by the printer to Royal Mail (Postal vote applications from all validly registered electors received by 18 April 2017 will be included in this issue).
26 April	Royal Mail commence delivery of 2nd issue to electors. These packs will 'hit the letterbox' on 26 - 27 April.

Project Status Update: Upcoming Dates - 2

EMB/ ELECTORAL COMMISSION SURVEYS

1. The Electoral Commission and the Convener of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) have developed a joint approach to monitoring the conduct of the local authority elections.
2. Part of the approach will consist of collecting information from all ROs through two surveys, which relate to how the elections are being managed in their area. This will help to build a picture of the arrangements that have been put in place across Scotland for the delivery of the Council elections.
3. The first survey (issued by the Electoral Commission and the EMB on 6 February) asked ROs to provide information about their plans for the elections. The second survey is due to be issued in early April and will ask for information about polling day and the count.
4. ROs and DROs will be contacted directly and provided with a link to the survey, which should be completed through *SurveyMonkey*.

***** COUNT DAY REMINDER *****

On 5 May, as soon as possible after your last ward count has been completed and declared, please would you remember to email [Dougie McGregor](#) your 'Returns' spreadsheet. This will allow a full, national picture of the election results to be made available on the EMB website.

The 'Returns' spreadsheet will be issued to you by Chris Highcock on 24 April. Please use that pro-forma rather than any previous version.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EasyPrint – Ballot Box Amalgamation Solution

Q. How can I arrange to see the new ballot box amalgamation solution?

A. Idox have created an online solution that enables Councils to easily merge ballot boxes with less than 200 ballot papers. The solution also creates reports in a format suitable for publication. The solution is available through EasyPrint and is explained in the EasyPrint user manual. Your Print Controller can arrange a demonstration/ training session for you.

EasyPrint – Secure Transfer of Data

Q. What is the correct process for uploading our electorate data to EasyPrint – do ROs do this directly, or can we just ask our EROs to do the upload on our behalf?

A. Under legislation, it is the responsibility of each RO as the data controller to make suitable local arrangements where they wish to delegate the task of uploading/transferring electoral data securely to EasyPrint to an ERO or other appropriate person or organisation.

A. Please contact your Print Controller to arrange for secure login details to be provided for a nominated individual, such as an ERO.

Polling Day Electorate

Q. When and how are Electorate numbers for each Ward entered into e-Count?

A. Electorate numbers are needed for various e-Count reports. Your Regional PM will ask you for the figures for each Ward. These will be entered into the system early in the set-up week, ideally as soon as the Count Centre is built. We would ask that a member of the Elections Team verifies with the Technical Manager that the Electorate numbers have been entered correctly.

A. At the meeting of the EMB on 30 March, it was agreed that, as has been the practice at electoral events in recent years, the electorate figures that will be deemed to apply at polling day should be those in effect published on **26 April** in the Final Election Notice of Alteration (FENA). This follows the FEIA deadline on 18 April and the following determination period which concludes on 25 April.

A. These figures should be provided to the eCount supplier to populate the eCount system and will be those used for the calculation of turnout percentages. The EROs have agreed to provide these figures to ROs on 26 April, making sure that we have a clear consistent electorate figure to which all can work. While there may be minor subsequent adjustments due to “clerical errors” etc, to avoid confusion and promote consistency these should be disregarded for the purpose of maintaining a clear and consistent electorate figure.



Payments to CGI for e-Counting

Q. When do I have to make payments to CGI under the terms of our Call-Off Contract?

A. CGI will invoice each council in two tranches: firstly in late January and again in late May. At the same time, the Scottish Government will contact you and ask you to invoice the Scottish Government for the net amount of your CGI invoice so that we can reimburse you for the costs of e-Counting. You will be reimbursed for the full first payment you make to CGI in the current financial year. (Alex Mowat emailed all ROs about this on 3 February 2017).

A. The second payment you make to CGI, after the May elections, will include the cost of ballot paper and postal voting pack printing. The Scottish Government's reimbursement of that second payment will not cover either these printing costs or any additional services you may have agreed with CGI.

Additional Print Costs

Q. Now that the EMB Convener has directed on there being at least one additional issue of postal ballot packs, what will be the cost implication for each council?

A. Councils were earlier provided with an estimated cost of print costs. However, we now know that there will be an extra cost to cover both the additional issue of postal voting packs and also the cost of the postal vote pack guidance 'inserts'. We will shortly contact all councils with an updated estimate of print costs.

Extracting Data and Report Export from the e-Counting System

Q. Can I get an electronic copy of each contest results and other reports before the whole Count is completed?

A. The e-Counting system has not been designed to allow data to be extracted electronically while counts are on-going. To do so could have an adverse effect on the operation of the system. In addition, all workstation ports are locked down to prevent unauthorised access to data.

A. All standard e-count reports can be run and printed off in hard copy during a count. The results report could, if required, be scanned or photographed to facilitate the publication of individual contest results shortly after each declaration.

A. After the conclusion of all counts for all wards in a council, the following reports should be published on websites: *Declaration of Results; Preference Summary; Transfers; Votes per Stage; Preference Profile; Election Results; and Preferences by Ballot Box.*

Q. What data will I receive once the Count is complete and how long will this take?

A. Once the whole Count is completed, the full suite of reports will be transferred to the secure hard drives that will be provided to each Council.

A. The data transfer takes place **after all contests have been counted** and involves 3 sequential processes, which are undertaken by CGI staff. These processes and the approximate time it takes for each is as follows:

- The full set reports are generated for each contest – it takes about 5 minutes to run the reports for each contest. Several people can work on this task at the same time so long as the count is finished.
- The Technical Manager will then initiate the system process that extracts the reports, ballot paper images and audit logs from the eCounting system. The process includes a check that all reports have been generated and error messages appear if they are not found. This process takes around 20 minutes per 100,000 ballot papers counted.
- The full set of assembled reports are then copied by the Technical Manager onto each of the 2 secure portable drives provided to each Council (or for each Count area for the Councils that have split Count Centres). This will take about 15 minutes.
- The whole transfer process should be completed in 1 to 1.5 hours in most cases. Please allow additional time for checking that all expected reports are on your portable hard drives.

Q. Why does the number of votes shown in count reports not match the number of scanned images that are exported to the secure hard drives?

A. The eCounting system captures images each time a ballot paper is scanned, so any re-scans will generate additional images. In addition, any ballot papers that are not scanned e.g. due to their condition, will not have an image in the database. For these reasons, it is not possible to reconcile the number of images with the expected number of ballot papers/votes recorded on the system at the point when data is transferred to councils following completion of the whole count.

A. The eCounting system has a full audit trail of what has happened to each ballot paper and that is part of the full set of data which councils receive after completion of the count. In the event of any legal challenge after the Election, it is possible to do reconciliation if that is necessary.

Q. Is there any special equipment or process that local authorities need to be aware of to use the external hard drives after the count close.

A. To ensure local authorities can read and extract the reports from the external hard drives after the count, it is advised to bring a local authority laptop along to your scheduled role-based training event. The procedure for data extraction will be tested and you will have the opportunity to test accessing the external hard drives.

Collection of Statistical and Other Information

Q. What statistical and other information will authorities be required to provide to the EMB?

A. The EMB has been tasked with providing a Scotland-wide picture of the results of May's local government elections. This means that they will need to collate data from all local authorities about candidates, turnout, party affiliation, postal voting etc.

A. In order to do this, the EMB will be collecting information from you in a two-stage process. The first stage will be just after the close of nominations on 29 March. The second stage will be immediately following completion of all counts within your authority on 5 May.

A. Draft copies of the Data Collection Returns were circulated in December and presented at the joint planning event in Glasgow on 12 January. Copies of the Returns for completion will be issued nearer the required submission dates.

Postal Packs

EXTRACTING POSTAL PACKS FROM THE PRINT RUN

Q. Will there be a process allowing for the extraction of postal packs from the print run between mailings?

A. Under this contract, which covers the printing for all 32 local authorities, it would not be practicable to ask the printer to extract postal packs between mailings. The timing for the second issue of postal voting packs is such that there would be just 3 days (10 to 13 April) for any extraction process to take place.

A. There has been a good deal of thought given to this by the Scottish Government, Idox and The Lettershop Group. However, manually extracting a large volume of packs from all 32 councils would introduce a considerable risk to the timetable and threaten the ability of the printer to dispatch the postal packs on time.

Q. How big a risk would an extraction process really be?

A. After speaking to the printer, we know that they have genuine concerns about the likely delay which an extraction process might cause. There would have to be a very thorough and time-consuming checking system in place no matter how many people were involved in the extraction exercise. Any mistake made at this point could mean valid postal packs being removed and voters disenfranchised. Equally, a mistake could see packs that should be removed still being dispatched. On balance, the risks attached to this outweigh the benefits.

Q. How do we deal with cases where, e.g., shortly after applying for a postal vote, a voter has died?

A. There are clearly sensitivities in such cases and this is appreciated. Good communication with voters and their families is key. If the situation is explained to them, the families of recently deceased voters will understand that postal packs can't readily be intercepted before being posted.

POSTAL PACK INSERT

Q. The Print Working Group had recommended an insert for the postal pack which was a pale yellow colour. Might this give rise to any concerns about the use of a colour which could be identified with a particular political party?

A. The pale yellow colour was originally chosen as it was considered ideal in terms of aiding readability. However there have since been some concerns raised that this colour may be one to avoid as it could be identified with certain political parties. To avoid any such difficulties, the printer has suggested using a pale cream colour instead and we have accepted this alternative. This introduces a distinct colour from the white postal pack materials while avoiding any 'political colour'.



Candidates and Agents

Q. Will candidates and their agents get an opportunity to review the e-counting system before the actual elections?

A. Yes. In each of the 32 count centres, there will be a candidates and agents demonstration of e-counting on the Wednesday of election week (3rd day). However, if you feel that any of your prospective candidates might like an earlier opportunity to see the e-counting system - and are willing to come to Edinburgh² - we could arrange for them to visit Pentland House during the training period in March. If you think you may wish to mention this to your candidates, please contact the Alex Mowat at: alex.mowat@gov.scot

² There will be separate arrangements made for the week of training to take place in Aberdeen.



Adjudication Rates

Q. What percentage of ballot papers are likely to require adjudication?

A. The testing of the e-counting system which took place at Stages 2 and 3 showed that between 15% and 18% of ballot papers generally needed adjudication. We also have figures from 7 recent by-elections that used the 2017 eCounting solution. These show that the percentage of ballot papers needing adjudication was in the range 13.7%-19.4%, with the overall average being 15.7%. While by-elections represent a small sample, the average adjudication rate is very similar to that obtained in testing. This is a big improvement over the 2012 version, which showed average rates in by-elections of 28.1%.

A. We know from extensive testing that the percentage of ballot papers requiring adjudication will vary due to a range of factors that are worth bearing in mind:

Rates tend to be higher than the average of 15%:

- Where there are a lot of candidates;
- Where there is an increased tendency for voter misunderstanding, perhaps due to demographic factors.

Rates tend to be lower than the average of 15%:

- Where there are only 4 or 5 candidates;
- Where there is better voter understanding;
- Where scanning operators are more experienced.



CGI Staffing for Counts

Q. When will I know who my Count Centre Manager and Technical Manager are?

A. Count Centre Manager and Technical Manager training is nearly complete and the process of matching those who have been assessed as suitable to fill these roles to each Council is underway. We expect to be able to provide names to all Councils within the next week.

Q. When will I meet my Count Centre Manager and Technical Manager?

A. Wherever possible, your Count Centre and Technical Manager will attend your Council's scheduled training session. If this is not possible, an appropriate opportunity after that will be identified.

Count Progress Display Screens

Q. Given that there are 3 possible public information displays (Count Progress, Candidate First Preference Votes and Count Centre layout), can my Council use its own display screens to supplement the 2 large display screens being provided for each Count?

A. Yes, Councils are welcome to provide their own supplementary display screens. However, these must have a VGA port in order to connect them to one of the Count Centre PCs. Please note that HDMI cannot be supported. Please let your RSM know if you plan to provide your own screens so that these can be incorporated into count centre layout plans and any additional requirements for cables can be determined.

Personation

Q. What do I do at the e-count if personation is suspected?

A. The protocol developed between the EMB and Police Scotland last year is being reviewed and updated. The suggested procedures to gather and record evidence are relevant to all electoral events. In an e-count, the ballot paper(s) relating to the suspected personation should be extracted and included in the count through the Manual Entry process.

A. The EMB have prepared a guidance note on the subject of personation and this can be found by clicking on the link below:

http://www.electionsscotland.info/downloads/download/102/emb_personation_guidance_march_2017



Count Centre Set-up: e-Sample Ballot Papers

Q. How can we be assured that the eCounting system has all the correct contest information and set-up in place to enable each Count to start as planned with no issues on 5 May?

A. In the days leading up to the election counts, the project's test ballot papers will be used for candidate walkthroughs and Council training. Once that has been completed, the system will be cleared down and reset in preparation for the live Count. The local CGI team will use e-sample ballot papers (more information on e-samples is below) to:

- check the “templates” (i.e. the images of the ballot papers) for each contest. These are needed so that the ballot papers can be recognised by the system and displayed on screens; and
- run a range of very small scale commissioning tests on the system that are designed to evidence that ballot papers for every contest are being correctly read and displayed by the system. This testing will take place for most Councils on Thursday, 4 May.

Q. What is the process for handling e-sample Ballot Papers?

A. e-Sample ballot papers are “live” ballot papers insofar as they have valid UIM/ barcodes. However, they are actually duplicates of actual ballot papers issued to postal voters and polling stations. These e-Sample ballot papers have “e-Sample” printed on the back in large letters.

A. All contests will have 15 e-Sample postal ballot papers and one book of 100 e-Sample station ballot papers. It is very important to ensure that all of these papers are carefully tracked and managed so there is no risk of them being accidentally included in a Count. The detailed local processes for handling these will be discussed and agreed with Election Managers. In summary, these are:

- The 15 e-Sample Postal Ballot Papers will be delivered to Pentland House for mark-up and then delivered securely to the relevant Count Centre.
- The book of 100 e-Sample Station Ballot Papers will be delivered to Councils along with all other live Station Ballots. The e-Sample Station Ballot Papers should be handed to the CGI team at the Count Centre on Monday 1st of May – these will be required for setting up and testing the system.
- 5 blank e-Sample ballot papers from each contest must be retained in Count Centres until the Count is completed in case these are required for business continuity reasons. These are needed to create the ballot paper templates on the system, without which e-Counting cannot work. It is recommended that, after commissioning and testing of the live system, the 5 blank e-Sample ballot papers are placed in sealed envelopes and stored in a separate secure place in the Count venue, e.g. locked in a room with the spare server.



- a small number (around 15–20) of marked-up e-Sample ballots from each contest will be used for testing purposes. These will have a prominent additional mark on the front (probably by ink stamp) to identify them as void samples. Each Council will be provided with details of the number of test ballots being used for each contest. Once the commissioning tests have been completed:
 - the CGI team will check that all used and unused e-Sample ballot papers are accounted for;
 - we would ask that a senior member of the Council Elections team validates that all are accounted for;
 - the e-Sample ballots are then placed in sealed envelopes, removed from the Count Centre by a senior member of the Council Elections team and either shredded or stored securely offsite.

Issue and Incident Management and Business Continuity

Q. What support arrangements will be in place for dealing with issues and incidents?

A. There are 3 primary layers of support in place:

- Teams to co-ordinate and support the detailed planning and delivery for your Council, led by Regional Project Managers and Print Controller s;
- A central support unit – the **Issue Resolution Centre (IRC)** – is operational in Pentland House. The IRC:
 - monitors progress for all aspects of project delivery across all Councils.
 - acts as the escalation point for issues that cannot be resolved locally.
 - co-ordinates actions for issues that cannot be resolved locally.
 - monitors and reports back on progress towards the resolution of issues.
 - Provides expert advice to assist in resolving challenging issues.
- A central **Incident Management Team (IMT)** comprising senior Project and Delivery staff is in place help manage and co-ordinate the response to serious incidents or events that could trigger business continuity plans. The IMT is in place to complement Council's local BCPs and to ensure that there is a single co-ordinated response across all aspects of eCount delivery. This team:
 - works with Councils, project teams and other stakeholders to identify solutions and initiate appropriate actions.
 - authorises project delivery related changes where necessary.
 - manages and co-ordinate s agreed actions.
 - ensures that all key stakeholders are engaged with and that effective communications are in place.
 - will provide support for the EMB and senior Scottish Government Officials and Ministers in the event of a Critical Incident.

Q. How do I know who to contact and when?

A. The **Issue and Incident Management Handbook** has been issued to all ROs and their Teams, as well as to eGI delivery teams and is also available on the eCounting Portal. The Issue Resolution Centre (IRC) will respond to issues raised by any member of a Council's election team. Councils may wish to consider local arrangements for reporting issues or incidents. The IRC will be operational until the final Count has been completed and the eCounting equipment has been removed from all sites.

Issue Resolution Centre : 0131 244 8338

Email : ecountingsupport@cgi.com



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



EST PRACTICE

Count Processes

Ballot Box Opening – Points to Note

- Count teams will wish to be aware of the potential – however uncommon – for a Postal voter to go to a Polling Place and inadvertently place their Postal ballot paper in a Station ballot box.
- The problem in this scenario is that the eCounting system will process such ballot papers even though they lack the correct Official Mark. So, in this scenario, the Postal ballot papers will still be processed even though they will not have been through AVI checks.
- We therefore advise that, should ballot box opening staff happen to identify them, any ballot papers which do not have the correct Official Mark (or which have no Official Mark) are removed at opening stage. These should be passed to the RO for review.
- In any event, the system will pick up these ‘rogue’ ballot papers at the Verification stage, so ballot box opening staff need not spend time looking for unusual Official Marks.
- While it is even less likely that a Tendered ballot paper makes its way into a ballot box, the pink colouring would make these easy to spot and remove.
- Your Regional Project Manager will have provided you with a ready reckoner to assist in determining the resources required to open ballot boxes and unfold etc the ballot papers ready for scanning. Please bear in mind that, depending on overall turnout and your ratio of postal voters, around 30% of total papers may already be neatly bundled following your AVI checking process.

Ballot Paper Accounts

- You may wish to have your Ballot Paper Accounts printed in a colour other than white to make them easy to see at the top of the ballot paper tray. You may also find it useful to make a copy of all BPAs after they have been arithmetically checked and corrected if required, and these can be retained in a central location, e.g. the Verification Station.

Manual Entries

- Where ballot papers are torn and cannot be processed through the system in the normal way, you may find it useful to place each ballot paper in a “poly pocket” with the ballot box number attached. All pockets requiring manual entry for a contest could then be placed in a more robust plastic wallet (perhaps of a colour not used for any other purpose within your count). This folder could be taken to the RO Station for entry. Papers should be returned to the relevant tray when all manual entries for a contest have been processed.

Elections
Edinburgh 2017

The City of Edinburgh Council Election

Guidance on Count Procedures for Candidates,
Election Agents and Counting Agents

Meadowbank Sports Centre, London Road, Edinburgh
Friday 5 May 2017

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



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.....	

Andrew Kerr

Returning Officer

**Scottish Local Government
Elections:
The City of Edinburgh**

Wards

Ward 1	Almond
Ward 2	Pentland Hills
Ward 3	Drum Brae/Gyle
Ward 4	Forth
Ward 5	Inverleith
Ward 6	Corstorphine/Murrayfield
Ward 7	Sighthill/Gorgie
Ward 8	Colinton/Fairmilehead
Ward 9	Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart
Ward 10	Morningside
Ward 11	City Centre
Ward 12	Leith Walk
Ward 13	Leith
Ward 14	Craigtoun/Duddingston
Ward 15	Southside/Newington
Ward 16	Liberton/Gilmerton
Ward 17	Portobello/Craigmillar

Important – please read

Everyone attending the Count will have to produce additional photographic identification to gain access to the Count Centre. This could be a bus pass, workplace ID card, photo driving licence, passport or student matriculation card. Failure to do so may result in a considerable delay to entry.

There will be a security search at the entrance to Meadowbank Sports Centre. Please note that no alcohol is allowed on the premises. Please do not bring any unnecessary baggage as this will slow down the search process.

WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO NOT BRING ANY BAGS AT ALL INTO THE VENUE

Protection of sports floor in Hall 1 - footwear

Hall 1 has a sprung sports floor which could be damaged if those walking on it wear pointed heels or stilettos. Please help us to avoid expensive damage by wearing shoes with low heels when you attend the Count.

The Practicalities

Getting to the Count

- The Count will be held at Meadowbank Sports Centre from 8.15am on Friday 5 May 2017.
- Agents and Observers can arrive from 7.45am.
- There is no parking at the Count venue.
- There is limited on street parking in and around Meadowbank
- The venue is well served by public transport.

Security passes

A reception desk for Candidates, Agents and Guests will be in the entrance foyer of the Meadowbank Sports Centre:

- Arrangements will be made for admission passes for Candidates, Guests, Elections Agents and Counting Agents to be collected in advance.
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, it has not been possible to collect the passes in advance, you may collect them on the day from the reception desk.
- Passes must be worn at all times in the Count Venue.

Facilities

Refreshments

The cafe will be open from 7.30am serving light refreshments. They accept cash and card payments. There is a 60p surcharge to pay by card.

Candidate and Agent Lounges

Two rooms have been set aside for Candidates, Agents and Guests. These lounges are on the same level as the reception desk. No alcohol is allowed on the premises. Please note that no food or drink is allowed in the Count Halls.

Wi-Fi

Public Wi-Fi is available through the count area. The Wi-Fi password will be available at Meadowbank reception desk.

First aid

Two qualified first aiders will be on duty. If you require assistance, ask security staff or staff with a radio to call for first aid.

Disabled access

Any observers who may need particular assistance with evacuation should get in touch with the Elections Team in advance so their requirements can be accommodated.

Dos and Don'ts in the Count Hall

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited within Meadowbank Sports Centre. If you leave the building, please remember to take your admission pass and photographic ID or you may not be allowed to come back in.

Mobile phones and other electronic equipment

MOBILE PHONES, CAMERAS OR VIDEO EQUIPMENT MUST NOT BE USED NEAR THE COUNT TABLES

Mobile phones, laptops, tablets etc are permitted within the building and you may tweet live during the Count process. The hashtag #edincount will be used throughout the Count. However, use of mobile phones is restricted in the Count halls.

- You are not permitted to take photos or video footage where the contents of any ballot paper could be identified. This is important to ensure the secrecy and integrity of the Election.
- As most mobile phones are also cameras, you must not use them when you are near the counting table as you could be perceived to be taking photographs or videos of papers and thus breaching the secrecy of the vote.
- Please make sure that your phone is on silent in the Count Halls.

Agents and Observers must move well away from the counting tables when using phones. Agents are asked to limit their use of mobile phones as this can distract staff and delay the Count. For the same reasons personal radios, iPods, etc, are prohibited within the Counting Halls.

Signs will be displayed at the Count explaining this policy and it is also stressed in the guidance to media attending the Count.

Media

Accredited media representatives from the press, radio and TV will be present within the Count hall. This will include television cameras and photographers. Cameras will not be allowed to approach the counting tables without supervision or, in the case of television, to focus on the tables in close-up. Media representatives will only be permitted into the counting areas under the close supervision of the Returning Officer's media team.

The Count

Who can attend the Count?

Candidates, their Guest, and their Election Agent are entitled to attend the Count.

Additionally, Counting Agents may be appointed specifically to attend the Count (see below). Candidates and Election Agents can also do anything that a Counting Agent is allowed to do.

Requirements of Secrecy

Every person attending the Count must read and abide by the Requirement for Secrecy (see Appendix 1). This is a very serious matter and breaches may be investigated by Police Scotland and could lead to fines or imprisonment.

What is the role of the Counting Agent?

The role of the Counting Agent is to support their Candidate. In addition, they also have an important part to play as the “eyes and ears” of the public in assuring that the Count is carried out accurately.

We rely on Agents and Observers to provide an assurance that the Count is secure and undertaken with integrity.

What does a Counting Agent do?

Counting Agents have a number of important roles to play at the Count:

- watching the papers being taken from the boxes, sorted and processed;
- observing the electronic counting process and making sure that it is accurate;
- drawing to the attention of the Supervisors any “Doubtful Ballot Papers”;

- if a Count is suspended for any reason or there is a break in the proceedings, Counting Agents can add their seals to the doors when the hall is secured.

Interaction with Count Staff

All Count Staff will wear a coloured bib. Counting Agents and Observers should not engage Count Staff in conversation or discussion and must not encroach into the Count Assistant’s workspace. Counting tables are laid out to allow Counting Agents to observe the process whilst remaining outside the barriers.

At the Adjudication stage of the electronic count process there are dual screens where observers can view the ballot papers that the Adjudication Count Assistants are reviewing.

If you think there is a problem at any stage in the count process, you must raise it with one of the Supervisors or the Count Manager and not the Count Assistants. Senior staff will have red bibs.

Supervisors have been instructed to ensure that Observers do not intrude on the Count Staff’s work area. While Observers have a role to scrutinise and ensure a transparent process, they must respect Count Staff and give them space to do their work. Observers should not lean over the chain link barrier or otherwise physically intrude upon the counting area. Observers must keep talk and noise to a minimum near the counting tables.

Observers must not block the circulation space round the edge of the Count Halls as it is both a corridor and an emergency exit route. To ensure clear evacuation routes there are no additional tables allowed in this space and any chairs placed in front of fire exits or blocking access to any circulation route will be removed by security.

The Count Process

The City of Edinburgh Council Election

Returning Officer



Andrew Kerr

Depute Returning Officer and Elections Manager



Chris Highcock

Depute Returning Officers and Count Managers



Scott Russell



Fran Cattanach



Andy Nichol

Count Managers



Hugh Dunn



Nick Smith

Depute Returning Officer



Laurence Rokey

Depute Returning Officers (Candidate Briefing)



Alistair Gaw



Paul Lawrence



Katy Miller



Michelle Miller

Depute Returning Officers (Adjudication)



Neil Jamieson



Kirsty-Louise
Campbell



Peter Watton



Gareth Barwell



Gavin King



Kevin McKee



Andy Gray



Jo McStay

Information Officers



Nick Croft



Hannah Ross



Tammy Gillies



Carla McHendry



Ritchie Somerville



Lynne Halfpenny

Who's Who at the Count?

Many people are involved in running an Election Count, but you are most likely to come across the following:

- The Returning Officer (RO) – this is the person in charge of the Election. Andrew Kerr is the Returning Officer (RO) for the seventeen wards in the City of Edinburgh Council.
- Depute Returning Officers (DROs) – will be assisting the RO throughout the Count and are able to act on his behalf.
- Count Manager (CM) – each Count area is managed by a CM. The CMs are also DROs.
- Adjudication DROs – will be working in pairs to undertake final adjudication of ballot papers.
- Candidate Briefing DROs – will be leading the briefing sessions for Candidates and their Election Agent
- Information Officers – will be available in count halls to answer Candidate and Agent queries and guide them to Briefing Rooms
- Ballot Box Opening Team – will be operating in Hall 3 and opening the ballot boxes and sorting the papers
- Registration and Verification Team, Scanning Team and Adjudication Team – will be undertaking the electronic count processes in Hall 1

Layout of the Count Area

The Count will take place in two Counting Halls on the lower floor in Meadowbank Stadium.

Box Opening Hall

Ballot Box opening will take place in Hall 3. The ballot papers will be taken out of boxes, unfolded and sorted so they are all face up and the same orientation.

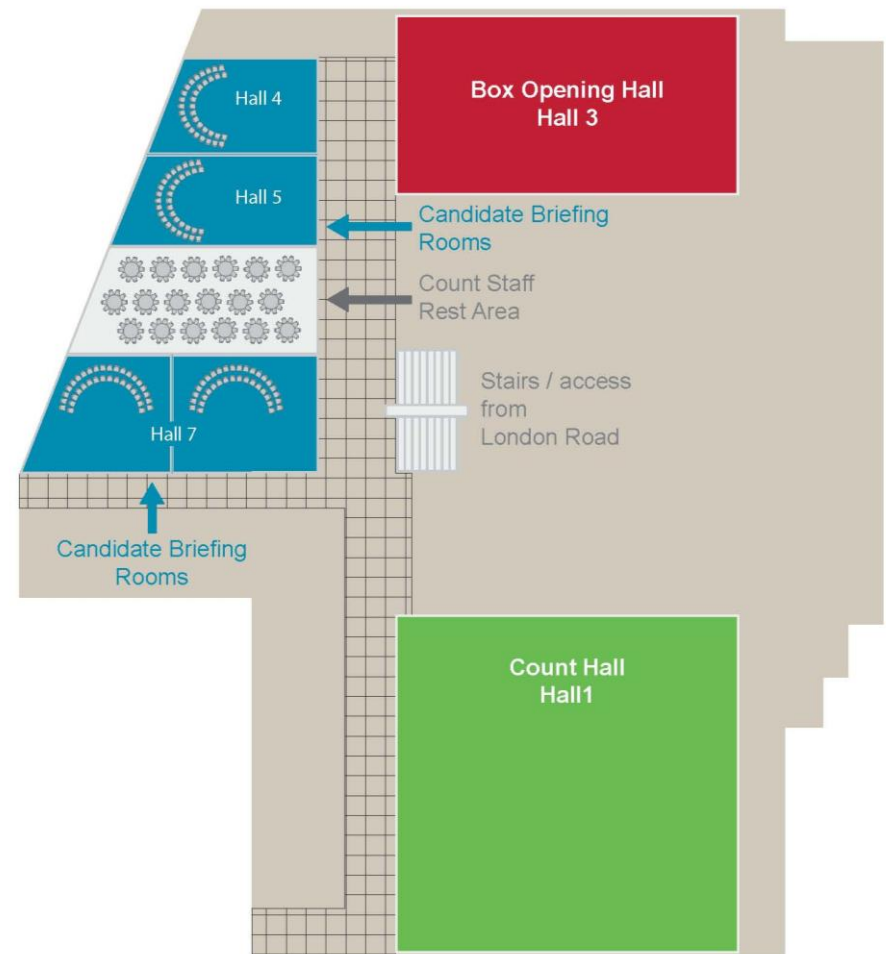
Count Hall

The Electronic Count will take place in Hall 1. The processes of registration, scanning, verification and adjudication will take place in this hall.

There will also be areas for the storage of boxes, a stage for announcements and an area for the media cameras.

Candidate Briefing Rooms

There are four briefing rooms for Candidates and Election Agents. These are in Hall 4 and 5. Hall 7 has two briefing rooms.



How the Count Works - Overview

The Count involves important integrity checks to ensure that the whole process has been secure and can be trusted so that the voter has confidence in the result. At the Count all of the ballot papers – unused, spoiled and those in the ballot boxes are accounted for.

Ballot papers will be counted electronically. The e-count process is outlined in the flowchart in figure 1 and in the following pages.

A Single Transferable Votes (STV) system will be used to elect the councillors for the 17 wards in the City of Edinburgh Council. Under the STV system a vacancy is filled when a candidate has achieved “a quota” of votes. The quota depends on the number of candidates to be elected.

Order of counts

The Counts will take place in Ward order.

In Hall 3, ballot boxes will be opened for three wards at a time starting with Ward 1 – Almond, Ward 2 – Pentland Hills and Ward 3 – Drum Brae/Gyle.

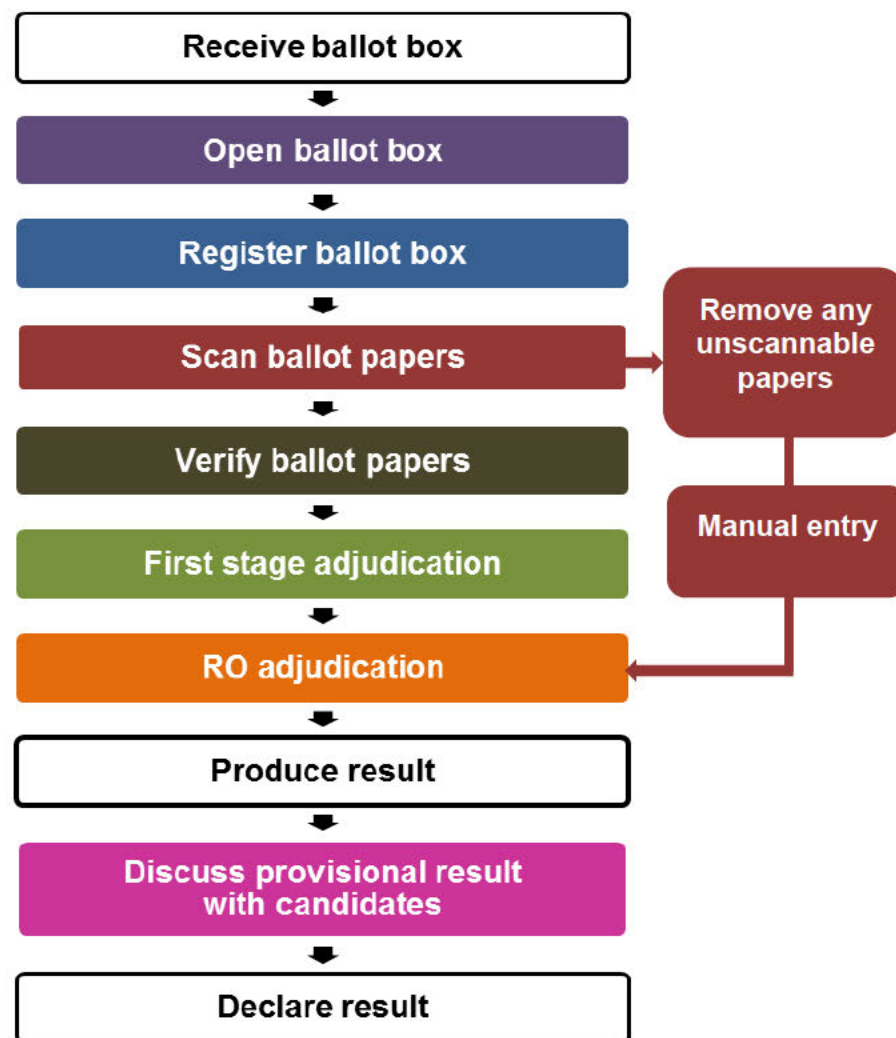
In Hall 1, the electronic count will count two Wards at a time starting with Ward 1 – Almond and Ward 2 – Pentland Hills.

Announcements

PA announcements will be made during the count as follows:

- the start of the opening of ballot boxes
- the start of the electronic count process
- the commencement of RO adjudication for each Ward
- the briefing for Candidates and their Election Agent of the provisional results for each Ward and
- the announcement of the result of each Ward.

Figure 1 – eCount Process



The Count Stages

There are two distinct stages to the counting process, both are undertaken electronically.

Verification of Ballot Boxes or “first count”

This is where the number of votes cast in each Ward is established by counting how many papers are in the boxes. At this stage, all the ballot papers are accounted for, those issued to voters (both Postal Votes and those papers issued at polling stations), and spoilt and unused papers. This stage is crucial as it checks that the ballot papers are properly accounted for.

At the end of the first Count the total number of votes being counted will be clear. Candidates and their Election Agent will be given a verification statement.

The Counting of Votes or “second count”

When verification is complete it is then possible to count the votes for each candidate and work out who will be elected using the STV process.

The Count Process

The Count process is as follows:

Ballot Box Opening (in Hall 3)

The first process is to open the ballot boxes:

- the ballot box is opened and emptied onto the table
- the empty box is shown to everyone present
- the ballot box label is placed in a stand on the table so that Observers can see which polling station it has come from
- the ballot papers are unfolded and sorted so they are all face up and in the same orientation towards Observers
- the papers are placed into cardboard Ballot Paper Trays, one for each ballot box
- the trays of papers will be taken on trolleys through to the Count Hall (Hall 1) where they will be placed on racks.

Registration (Hall 1)

This is the first stage of the electronic count process (eCount) process. It records that a Ballot Paper Tray/Ballot Box has been included in the count.

- a member of the count staff will bring a Ballot Paper Tray from the ‘Awaiting Registration’ area to a Registration desk;
- the tray’s barcode is scanned to log receipt of those ballot papers and the expected total of papers entered (from the Ballot Paper Account) against that ballot box in the e-counting system;
- the Ballot Paper Tray is then taken to the ‘Awaiting Scanning’ area.

Scanning (Hall 1)

The second stage of the eCount process is to scan the ballot papers. This process counts the ballot papers and scans the image for adjudication:

- a member of the count staff will bring a Ballot Paper Tray to a Scanning Desk
- the barcode is scanned so the images from the papers will be stored in the e-counting database
- the contents of each Ballot Paper Tray will be scanned in a number of batches
- when all the papers in a Ballot Paper Tray have been scanned, the Tray is moved to the ‘Scanning Complete’ area.

Verification (Hall 1)

The next stage of the eCount process is verification. At this stage the number of ballot papers processed will be compared against the expected number of papers:

- where there is no discrepancy, the Ballot Box contents will be marked ‘verified’. This allows the eCount system to process the data from that box and pass any ballot images it cannot process automatically to the Adjudication stage
- where there is a discrepancy the box will be sent for rescanning
- a variance may be resolved where there is a corresponding variance in a ballot box from the same polling place

- where there continues to be a variance outwith the acceptable limits, the verification operator will examine the reasons for the variance.

First Level Adjudication (Hall 1)

The next stage is to adjudicate ballot papers that the system could not, for various reasons, automatically process:

- Adjudication Officers will work in pairs, viewing images, one after another.
- Adjudication Officers will review and approve papers with good votes on them (e.g. where the system's threshold test settings for character recognition require a manual decision on a ballot paper which is clearly good or where there is an 'break in sequence' in the voter's preferences – for instance where a paper has marked preferences 1,2,3,5,6 the vote is only acceptable for preferences 1,2,3)
- Adjudicators have been given a copy of the Electoral Commission's Doubtful Ballot Placemat. They are able to accept a ballot paper as good if it is on the Placement or is similar, or if it is obvious who the vote is for.
- Information from the Electoral Commission with guidance on how to deal with Doubtful Papers will be available at each Count area and Count Managers have been briefed on the principles to be applied. Copies of the Doubtful Votes Placemats produced by the Electoral Commission will be placed on signs in the Count Hall, in the café and in candidate lounges.
- ballot papers which are unclear or likely to be rejected must be passed to the Returning Officer Adjudication stage for final adjudication.

Returning Officer Adjudication (Hall 1)

The final stage of the Count process is RO Adjudication:

- The Adjudication will be announced ONCE only. It is the responsibility of Candidates/Election Agents in the Ward to ensure that they are present at Adjudications if desired.

- Candidates and their Election Agent will be invited into one of four roped-off areas in front of large RO Adjudication screens.
- DROs will work in pairs to undertake final adjudication and manual entry of papers that cannot be scanned.
- If it is not possible to work out the voter's intention the ballot paper is rejected and the reason for the rejection will be marked on the eCount system. These are called "Rejected Votes." Only the Returning Officer or a Senior Adjudication Officer acting as his Depute can reject a ballot paper.
- If the Candidate or Agent attending the Adjudication disagrees with a decision to reject a ballot paper, they can ask the Senior Adjudication Officer to mark on the system "rejection objected to."

Provisional Briefing of Results

After all papers for a Ward have been scanned and adjudication is complete, count management will set the count software to run the count.

There are four briefing areas for Candidates and their Election Agent. Candidates and election agents will be asked to attend at a briefing room, where copies of the Candidate Votes per Stage report of the provisional results will be handed out and explained. Copies of the Declaration of Results report will also be given out and a few minutes given to review it, after which candidates and agents will be asked to confirm that they accept the results.

Recount

The decision on whether to hold a recount or not rests with the Returning Officer. It is unlikely that a recount would be undertaken solely on the grounds of a close result. A recount would be more likely if there were concerns raised regarding the integrity of the count processes. Candidates, agents and observers must raise any concerns about integrity of the count or how any procedure is carried out immediately, so they can be resolved at once.

Recounting means scanning all the ballot papers for the Ward again, repeating the count process described above.

Declaration – The City of Edinburgh

Council Election – Results

Once the provisional result in a Ward has been agreed, the Returning Officer (RO) will announce each result from the stage in Hall 1. The RO will announce the number of Councillors to be elected, the turnout, the number of rejected votes and the quota of votes for a Candidate to be elected. The RO will then announce the number of first preference votes for each of the Candidates followed by the candidates who have been elected and at what stage they were elected.

Due to the number of Counts ongoing and the various announcements that need to be made, speeches will not be allowed by any candidates. There will be opportunities for all Candidates to speak to the media following the declarations.

Successful Candidates

As soon as the result for each ward has been declared, successful candidates will be directed to the Board Room, behind main reception, to complete key paperwork. Staff will be on hand to assist successful candidates to the Board Room and the route from reception will be signposted for '**Councillor Declarations and Photographs**'.

The process will not take long and will include:

- **Signing a “Declaration of Acceptance of Office” form:** the declaration has to be signed before a successful candidate takes up their duties as an elected member of the Council
- **Confirmation/collection of key personal information:** to set successful candidates up without delay on key systems including IT and payroll we will need their home address (including postcode), date of birth, National Insurance Number and bank account details (account number, sort code and postal address). **Candidates should bring this information with them** to allow us to create a personal user account over the weekend so that successful candidates can access Council systems from Monday 8 May.
- **Establishing email address preference:** if there is already a user on the system with the same name then we will need to agree a modified address. We will inform successful candidates if this is the case.
- **Official photograph:** official photographs of successful candidates will be taken and an identification pass will be issued that will give access to Council buildings. Please note that any political party identification or emblems will need to be removed for photographs.

Appendix 1 – Requirements of Secrecy

Notes

Rule 27, Scottish Local Government Election Rules 2011

PART III

CONTESTED ELECTIONS

Requirement of secrecy

[...]

(3) Every person attending at the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of voting and shall not –

(a) ascertain or attempt to ascertain at the counting of the votes the number or other unique identifying mark on the back of any ballot paper;

(b) communicate any information obtained at the counting of the votes as to the candidate for whom any vote is given on any particular ballot paper.

[...]

(8) If a person acts in contravention of this rule that person shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding the amount specified as level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.