

Scotland's Electoral Future – Delivering Improvements in Participation and Administration

Report by Chief Executive

1 Purpose of Report

The Scottish Government has issued a consultation paper (copy attached as an **Appendix** entitled “*Scotland's Electoral Future – Delivering Improvements in Participation and Administration*”). Comments are invited from interested parties and individuals by 11 July 2014.

2.1 Background

The Paper arises from a review of the Scottish Local Government Elections of 2012 carried out by several key stakeholder bodies including the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Regeneration Committee. The exercise intends to use the lessons learned in the 2012 local government elections to inform preparations for all future elections in Scotland.

2.2 The report advises that some of the proposals put forward by the above stakeholders are relevant only to future local government elections while others could equally apply to all elections in Scotland. While not all of the underlying causes of low voter turnout are concerned with or affected by the electoral process, the Scottish Government is particularly keen to explore methods of modernising existing process to encourage participation.

2.3 There are a total of 12 Consultation Questions in the paper. Included among these are two ‘Pilot Project Questions’ which seek views on the possibility of setting up pilot schemes concerning *All Postal Voting* and *Random Ballot Paper Ordering*. The Scottish Government advise that they would welcome any thoughts on all or any of these questions.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

Certain outcomes could increase resource requirements but cannot be quantified at this stage of the consultation process.

3.2 Risk

Risk in the election processes could increase or decrease but cannot be quantified at this stage of the consultation process.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☒ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not relevant.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not relevant.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not relevant.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The consultation is part of the Scottish Government's continuing process to make voting more meaningful for people and communities.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

One of the main aims of the Review is to encourage and maximise voter turnout and participation in the electoral process.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not relevant.

3.10 IT Issues

These cannot be quantified at this stage of the consultation process..

4 Recommendations

The Council is invited to comment on the Scottish Government's Consultation Paper – *“Scotland's Electoral Future – Delivering Improvements in Participation and Administration”*.

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Background Papers:- Consultation Paper – *“Scotland's Electoral Future – Delivering Improvements in Participation and Administration”*.

Declaration Box

Instructions: *This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.*

Title of Report: *Fifth Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland*

Meeting Presented to: *Midlothian Council*

Author of Report: *Allan R Brown*

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- ☒ *All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support.*
- ☒ *All risk implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *All other report implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.