



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Single Transferable Vote Ballot
Paper for Scottish Local
Elections May 2007
Qualitative Research to
Inform Design

Local Government



**SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE BALLOT
PAPER FOR SCOTTISH LOCAL ELECTIONS
MAY 2007**

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO INFORM
DESIGN**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Background to the research

- The Scottish local council elections taking place in May 2007 will use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system and multi-member electoral wards for the first time
- the STV system and multi-member candidature requires a ballot paper that allows the electorate to vote for more than one candidate from the same party – or different parties - as well as accommodate independent candidates
- four possible STV ballot designs were developed for the purposes of this research, the designs adopt the following formats:

Design 1: alphabetical listing by candidate name

Design 2: alphabetical listing by candidate name with party details in a column to the left of the candidate name

Design 3: alphabetical listing by party name, then by candidate name within party groups; independent candidates listed alphabetically at the top

Design 4: alphabetical listing by party name (in an additional column to the left of the candidate names), then by candidate name within party groups; independent candidates listed alphabetically at the top

2 Overall preference

- the clear overall preference is for alphabetical listing by party name rather than by candidate and for the party name in an additional column to the left of the candidate names
 - 71 preferred alphabetical listing by party; 23 preferred alphabetical listing by candidate
 - 71 preferred party names in an additional column; 26 preferred no column

- when compared, the preference is for Design 4 because this uses the design elements described above
- 55 out of 100 preferred this design, and none of the other three designs were close in number of preferences
- voters generally feel that ballot papers alphabeticised by party are clearer, more ordered and more likely to be completed correctly than those with candidates in alphabetical order
- the minority who prefer alphabetical listing by candidate feel this format encourages voters to give greater thought to individual candidates and their attributes rather than to vote along party lines
- the additional column with party name is thought to make it absolutely clear which party an individual belongs to (this is especially helpful for those less familiar with party logos)
- some feel additional information is unnecessary but can give no strong, compelling reasons to exclude this column

3. **Completing STV ballot papers**

- most completed the ballot papers correctly; there were only a handful of papers with mistakes
- these were:
 - using 'Xs' rather than numbers
 - giving candidates from same party the same ranking number
- these mistakes were a consequence of voters not understanding or reading the instructions and **not** related to the ballot paper layout
- this said, it is apparent that a significant number have little clear understanding of the STV voting format
- many simply vote for the same number of candidates as there are seats available and assume there is one vote per available seat
- in addition, some are unaware they can vote for as many candidates as they like

- where it is understood that voters could make as many preferences as they wished, many tend not to rank more than six candidates, primarily because they feel they would be making uninformed choices
- others limit the number of candidates/parties they vote for because they are reluctant to vote for individuals or political parties they do not support
- both the instructions on the ballot paper and on the separate voter notes are thought helpful, particularly the separate voter notes
- as noted, most of the mistakes made are caused by respondents not reading the instructions carefully or at all

4 Recommendations

- on this evidence, design 4 seems the clearest and easiest of the ballot paper designs to complete
- in our view, this design does not require any significant revisions
- given the mistakes made, we would suggest giving the voter instructions at the top of the paper as much prominence as possible (particularly the instruction not to mark with a cross or tick)
- the signs are that many voters will initially struggle to understand the mechanics of the STV electoral system
- as a consequence, they will not take full advantage of a system that allows them to put forward a range of preferences
- any media campaign and voter instructions need to clearly inform voters that STV means individuals' second and possibly third choice candidates can be elected to vacant seats

CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Background

- The Scottish local council elections taking place in May 2007 will use the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system for the first time
- multi-member wards with either three or four seats will be used for these elections and each party will therefore be able to nominate a maximum of three or four candidates per ward
- the STV system and multi-member candidature requires a ballot paper that allows the electorate to vote for more than one candidate from the same party – or different parties - as well as accommodate independent candidates
- four possible STV ballot designs were developed for the purposes of this research, the designs adopt the following formats:

Design 1: alphabetical listing by candidate name

Design 2: alphabetical listing by candidate name with party details in a column to the left of the candidate name

Design 3: alphabetical listing by party name, then by candidate name within party groups; independent candidates listed alphabetically at the top

Design 4: alphabetical listing by party name (in an additional column to the left of the candidate names), then by candidate name within party groups; independent candidates listed alphabetically at the top

- A similar research exercise, utilising the same methods, was carried out in July 2006 on behalf of the Electoral Commission to test possible design options for the Scottish Parliamentary election ballot papers¹.

¹ Cragg Ross Dawson (2006) *Ballot paper Designs for Scottish Parliament Elections 2007*, The Electoral Commission. <http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/templates/search/document.cfm/17187>

1.2 Objectives

- research was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to test the above ballot paper designs and identify which is best suited for use in the May 2007 local council elections
- to examine responses to each of the ballot paper designs with regard to:
 - overall clarity and comprehension
 - usability: how easy they make it for voters to express their preferences
 - layout and format
 - different permutations of the design formats
 - clarity and value of instructions on how to use the ballot
 - possible improvements
 - differences in response by demographics (age, gender, socio-economic class), locality and whether or not participants identify with a particular political party

CHAPTER TWO RESEARCH PROCEDURE

2.1 Methodology

- 100 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted in four locations in Scotland
- interviews were semi-structured and lasted about 20 minutes
- respondents were recruited spontaneously on the street and interviewed immediately
- they were asked to use each of the four proposed ballot papers in polling booths as if taking part in a real election, and then discussed them with the interviewer
- respondents in two locations were informed that there were three seats available in the ward they were voting in and in the other two locations they were told there were four seats
 - this approach was used in order to determine whether the number of preferences people expressed was related to the number of seats available
- prominent/well known Scottish politicians were used as candidates on the ballot papers in order to help respondents who might want to vote for more than one candidate from the same party make informed decisions with regard to their preferred choices
- respondents were supplied with a separate information sheet on STV voting prepared specially for the research project
- interviews were conducted 10th – 12th October 2006 by Lisa Malangone, Africa Munyama, Tim Porter and Amy Turton

2.2 Sample

- 100 interviews with people who will be eligible to vote in Scotland by May 2007 and who intend to vote
- 25 each in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Inverness

- 24 aged 17-24; 17 aged 25-34; 23 aged 35-45; 18 aged 46-60; 18 aged 61-70+ (11 aged 61-70; 7 aged 71+)
- 49 Male; 51 Female
- 48 BC1 social class; 24 C2; 28 DE
- 37 with five or more Standard grade passes, GCSEs at grade C or above, or O levels at grade 6 and above; 63 with fewer than five
 - those with lower educational attainment were over-represented to ensure that any issues relating to comprehension of the ballot papers and the STV process were captured
- 61 who identified with a political party; 39 who did not or refused to say
- of those who did, 30 identified most with Labour, 17 with the Scottish National Party, 7 with the Conservative Party, 5 with the Liberal Democrats, 2 with the Scottish Socialist Party

CHAPTER THREE MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 Contextual points

3.1.1 Attitudes to voting

- most saw themselves as conscientious, habitual voters; a sizable number claimed they voted in local, Scottish Parliamentary and General Elections, though many admitted they did not always vote
- a handful (not yet or just turned 18) had not yet voted but said they intended to at the next opportunity
- respondents tended to see voting as a combination of a right and civic obligation

WHY DO YOU VOTE?

“Because I’ve the right to vote. I used to go with my granny and granddad and they used to show me how to do it, pick people.”

IS THAT RIGHT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO EXERCISE?

“Aye, I feel it is my duty to do it.”

D5 Male D 25-34 Edinburgh

“I vote all the time because it is important in terms of society.

People fought long and hard for everyone to have the right to vote.

It is part of our civic duty.”

D7 Female C1 25-34 Edinburgh

- many felt very strongly about voting; they believed it was the only true opportunity citizens had to hold elected officials to account - typically expressed as *‘If you don’t vote, you can’t complain’*

WHY VOTE?

“Then I can have my say. And I don’t feel guilty if I’m shouting about something. You get these people who don’t vote and they are always mouthing off about what this councillor is doing. I think they don’t vote so why are they worried about all that.”

D16 Female D 61-70+ Edinburgh

- most were loyal to one political party and said they always knew which party they were going to vote for before they arrived at the polling station

“People go for the name of the political party rather than the candidate. You find that in the majority of elections. They go for the party they have been brought up with. It is not the person or the work that is actually done for the constituency.”

D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

“I vote for the Labour party all the time. I have consistently voted Labour.”

D5 Male D 25-34 Edinburgh

- however, it was clear that some did not have strong political party affiliations and voted for whoever they felt best represented their interests
- a minority (typically more C2DE) did not reflect on why they voted and seemed to do so out of habit
- most voters claimed not to prioritise one type of election as more important
- a minority said general elections were more important because decisions that most affected the country came from Westminster
- a few others felt that local and regional issues were more relevant to them than national concerns; they saw local council and Scottish Parliamentary elections as more significant than general elections

“Well at the moment local is more important because it is making key decisions about the economy on foreign policy, Scotland is as important to Britain as England is. The Scottish parliament has the major say.”

D79 Male B 35-45 Dundee

“The local one is more beneficial because it is about the local area.”

D59 Female C1 17-24 Inverness

- some respondents claimed they were more informed about the personalities campaigning at local elections because they:
 - were from the area and well known
 - had a stronger presence at election time than Westminster and Scottish Parliament candidates
- many said that the individual candidate was more important than the party when it came to voting at local elections

“The candidate is important because you know a candidate and you know what they are going to do, regardless of the party, you are going to vote for the candidate because you know that they are going to stand up for what they believe in and not just go by the party values.”

D59 Female C1 17-24 Inverness

- but few could name their local councillors or the candidates who stood at previous local elections

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL?

“it’s a Labour council. I should know my local councillor’s name but I couldn’t tell you.”

D29 Male B 17- 24 Glasgow

“I don’t know the names of the local councillor no. I know the MPs. I could tell you the local MP.”

D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

3.1.2 Awareness of Single Transferable Vote

- there was virtually no awareness of the proposed change to STV for the local elections in May 2007
 - it is worth noting that this research was conducted prior to the start of the planned public information campaign that will be run in advance of the elections
- a handful of more informed respondents (typically BC1s and better educated) had heard of changes to the local election voting system but had little knowledge of the detail
- sources of information on the change were vague but these people appeared to have heard about it in local media
- very few were familiar with the STV electoral system, though some were aware of the concept of preferential voting; they believed that the Scottish Parliamentary elections used a ranking system²

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THIS VOTING SYSTEM?

“Yes with putting it in order, I’ve seen it in leadership elections for some of the elections.”

D79 Male B 35-45 Dundee

“With the Scottish Parliament elections I think you have the list as well.”

D7 Female C1 25-34 Edinburgh

DOES THIS SEEM LIKE A FAMILIAR WAY OF VOTING?

“Yes. They have done ‘1,2,3’ with PR for MSPs.”

D26 Female B61-70+ Glasgow

² The Scottish Parliament election uses a form of proportional representation called the Additional Member System in which voters have two votes, one for their constituency and one for a regional list. Unlike STV this system uses single crosses for both votes and does not invite voters to express preferences numerically.

- when STV was explained, few respondents questioned it or appeared interested in why the system was being introduced or what the repercussions might be
- very few fully understood the STV electoral system and how it was meant to work; misunderstanding was widespread

DO YOU UNDERSTAND STV VOTING?

“Is it count how many ‘ones’ there are and then the ‘twos’ count but not as much as a ‘one’, like Eurovision but not.”

D77 Female C1 17-24 Dundee

3.2 Response to the ballot papers

3.2.1 Initial impressions

- first impressions of all the papers were broadly favourable
- initially, the STV designs were thought to be ordinary ballot papers; they came across as similar in design, layout and colouring to traditional ballot papers
- the more observant noticed that some parties had more than one candidate
- most did not query the presence of additional candidates, but a few were confused by this: they felt they had ‘too much choice’

“Too complicated. It is just the amount of candidates on it. It confuses people. It is too confusing, too many people when you are voting for 3 people in one district.”

D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

“People will get confused that they can put down as many as they want. Too much choice. Some people may just get fed up and randomly do it. There is potential for folk to get fed up and put down numbers next to people whatever.”

D7 Female C1 25-34 Edinburgh

- differences between the four designs were rarely spotted at first glance
- on closer inspection, some noticed:
 - the extra column on designs 2 and 4
 - that the order of candidates differed

3.2.2 Completing the ballot papers

- most found the ballot papers easy to read and use, and said there was little that was unclear or difficult to understand
- the instructions at the top of the ballot papers and the separate information sheet produced for the research were thought helpful and aided completion
- some commented they would have been less confident that they had voted correctly without the separate information sheet
- they appreciated the information about rating candidates sequentially and voting for candidates from different parties
- most voters completed the ballot papers correctly, even if they did not understand how STV was meant to work, and would have had their votes counted in a real election
- typically respondents voted along party lines, though many were happy to express their preferences across different parties
- it was clear that many did not fully understand the concept and mechanics of STV when they saw the ballot papers:
 - many chose the same number of candidates as the number of seats that they were told were available (three votes in Edinburgh and Glasgow; four votes in Dundee and Inverness)
 - some respondents voted for six candidates but only because the information sheet gave an example of ranking six
 - many only rated two candidates because they misread the instructions at the top of the ballot papers which refers to marking the figure '1' and '2'

DID YOU HOPE THAT THE 3 CANDIDATES YOU VOTED FOR WOULD GET THE 3 SEATS?

"Yes."

D5 Male D 25-34 Edinburgh

HOW CLEAR WAS IT HERE THAT YOU CAN VOTE FOR AS MANY CANDIDATES AND AS MANY DIFFERENT PARTIES AS YOU WANTED?

"I wasn't sure at first, it said 'more than 2'. I thought maybe 2."

D27 Male C1 17-24 Glasgow

HOW CLEAR IS IT YOU CAN VOTE FOR AS MANY CANDIDATES AS YOU LIKE?

"It doesn't say you can put a number against them all. It says here mark up to six [candidates]. It doesn't say 8,9 or 10."

IF IT HAD SAID THAT, WOULD YOU HAVE CARRIED ON?

"Yes. I would've carried on."

D4 Male D 17-24 Glasgow

- where voters understood that they could rank as many candidates as they wished, many restricted their choices because they did not want to vote for certain parties
- in other cases, respondents limited the number of candidates ranked because they did not know enough about each one to make an informed decision: they believed it was pointless to carry on ranking them

YOU STOPPED AT 3. WHY DID YOU NOT CARRY ON?

"Because I don't like any of the other parties."

D5 Male D 25-34 Edinburgh

WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED WITH FOUR?

"Basically, I don't feel comfortable voting for Labour or Conservative or Scottish National Party."

D79 Male B 35-45 Dundee

"Once I got beyond the first 4 or 5 I wasn't that interested in ranking anyone above that. Probably because I would be keener just to prioritise my top 2 or 3. Because it is a single transferable role, I don't want my vote being transferred at all to some parties."

D7 Female C1 25-34 Edinburgh

- a few respondents rated all 14 candidates but only because they thought it was a requirement: they misunderstood the instructions

I JUST WONDERED WHY YOU KEPT GOING

"Because it [instructions] says 'and so on' and I assumed I had to keep going."

D77 Female C1 17-24 Dundee

- despite the view that the designs were straightforward, some respondents made mistakes; 13 out of 100 ballot papers were unintentionally spoiled
- it is worth noting that of the 13 respondents who spoilt their initial ballot papers, 9 realised their mistakes and corrected subsequent papers – many admitted they had voted before reading instructions carefully

- the most common mistakes were:
 - ‘Xs’ used rather than numbers
 - candidates from a particular party rated with the same preference number (i.e. all Labour marked ‘1’, all SNP marked ‘2’ etc.)
- on the whole, mistakes were made primarily because voters did not read instructions sufficiently thoroughly (or at all) rather than as a result of the ballot paper design

“It said 1-3 but said something about missing out 4. I didn’t understand the 5 and 6 as well.”
D14 Male E 25-34 Edinburgh
- those who ignored or failed to read the instructions properly believed they did not contain any vital information and they assumed the instructions paragraph was administrative ‘blurb’
- a minority failed to understand the instructions (and fully grasp the concept of preferential voting) despite reading them thoroughly
- mistakes tended to be made by older respondents (80+) and by C2DEs/less educated
- many older respondents were confused by the preferential voting/ranking system; they said they were so used to marking with a ‘X’/tick that any other way would be confusing

3.2.3 Alphabetical listing by party name

- this was clearly the preferred format, primarily because it came across as easier to negotiate and read
- because parties were grouped together, people felt they could find the candidates they wanted to vote for easily and quickly

“It is recognisable. The band is more distinctive than the candidates listed alphabetically. From that you can see who is within that banding. If I am for a party, I know that my vote is for them.”

D6 Male C1 46-60 Edinburgh

“It’s a lot easier to find -. I find it easier to look at. I’m not having to jump around to look for specific people in specific parties. I find

it a lot easier to take in information. "For who I'm voting for I can look at the party then go down a list."

D29 Male B 17- 24 Glasgow

"You've got them all grouped together. It's not all higgledy piggledy."

77 Female C1 17-24 Dundee

"Much easier. Because they are all set up. You have your Independents, Scottish Tories, you know who they are. Then you have your preferences in each party. That one [alphabetical listing by candidate name] is all higgledy-piggledy"

D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

- even those who did not vote along party lines believed they could identify candidates quickly because they would look for the individual's party first
- few people noticed that the parties were grouped alphabetically
- there were no spontaneous comments about the parties being ordered this way, but when prompted most thought it made sense
- the positioning of the independent candidates prompt little comment
- when asked, most felt that it was best to list the independents at the top of the ballot papers given that there would be no logo to identify them

"They [independent candidates] tend to be a bit nondescript because they don't have the logo."

D42 Male C2 46-60 Glasgow

3.2.4 Alphabetical listing by candidate name

- a few voters preferred alphabetical listing by candidate name
- they believed that voters would be encouraged to read through the entire list of candidates and give greater consideration to how they made their selection
- their rationale was that voters would go through the entire list of candidates rather than simply look for the party name and/or logo
- some believed that ordering candidates alphabetically was fairer because multi-candidate parties could not take advantage of grouping (which gave them greater visual stand-out) and each individual was given equal prominence

“Voting by party, you are drawn towards the party itself. The party is like saying vote for us. I like alphabetical by candidate a lot better.”

D59 Female C1 17-24 Inverness

- only a handful noticed that candidates listed were alphabetically; most assumed they had been ordered randomly
- those who did not notice alphabetical listing thought the formatting here was confused, unordered and less straightforward to read

“This has put me off! I would be confused with that. You’d have to go right down there for the party you are looking for. There are people behind, you just go in and write your cross and come out again. That could be daunting if you were in the box. I wouldn’t know what to mark,”

D16 Female D 61-70+ Edinburgh

“It’s certainly harder to find [your candidate]. There’s too much.”

D29 Male B 17- 24 Glasgow

“It’s confusing. I think you need all the parties together.”

D77 Female C1 17-24 Dundee

- many also felt that it was more difficult to rate more than six candidates using this format and that voters would be more likely to make a mistake
- they believed that because the candidates were harder to find, people might vote for the wrong candidate

“There’s a danger that if you don’t read it properly then you could vote for the wrong person. You have to read it all through. If you didn’t read it all you could get mixed up.”

D42 Male C2 46-60 Glasgow

3.2.5 Party name in additional column

- most respondents had less strong feelings about the inclusion of the additional column than they did over the issue of candidate/party order
- when prompted, most preferred the inclusion of the column because:
 - it made the column with candidates’ details seem less cluttered and ‘busy’
 - it helped voters identify/confirm candidates’ party; this was particularly useful for those less familiar with party logos

“The names are down that side. That is much better. Because people with bad eyesight can’t see the symbols. They might not know who they are voting for. This one is telling you the parties.”
D5 Male D 25-34 Edinburgh

“I like the separate columns, saying which party they are, no that is too much it’s too cluttered.”
D77 Female C1 17-24 Dundee

“It looks neater. Not so congested.”
D27 Male C1 17-24 Glasgow

“This one is not so easy to understand. You have to read the whole name and then find out whether they’re in the Scottish National Party. Whereas this one was clearer because it had the extra column.”
D42 Male C2 46-60 Glasgow

- a minority were less keen on the additional column:
 - they thought it might distract voters
 - some felt it was unnecessary additional detail to read
 - others believed it gave the party name too much prominence and detracted from the candidates

“You are looking there and then go across, too much reading involved. It is confusing because they are reading Scottish Labour and ticking that, whereas there you are reading a person’s name and then the party.”
D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

“You’ve got the party there which you are drawn to and you are drawn to the party more than the people, which is never a good thing. It just drags your attention. I’d put the column in there with the name of the party by the logo, so you would have them next to each other.”
D59 Female C1 17-24 Inverness

- some commented that the word ‘Scottish’ before every party name made it more difficult to pick out the parties at a glance; a few suggested leaving it out all together (apart from for the SNP)

“If you read down it, the amount of Scottish parties you see, too much in terms of ‘Scottish’. It is local elections. You don’t need the word ‘Scottish’. They [voters] know it is local elections.”
D18 Male D 46-60 Edinburgh

- the alternative approach with only two columns was largely rejected

- a small number preferred this format and thought it made the ballot papers look simpler and ‘tidier’ than the three column alternative
- but for most it had the opposite effect:
 - the party details appeared recessive and were not easy to see
 - for the majority who said they voted along party lines this made the ballot paper more difficult to use

“This one has the party names underneath. It is putting me off.”

D16 Female D 61-70+ Edinburgh

“It’s still a lot of information straight down the middle. I would say too much. I’d prefer having columns.”

D29 Male B 17- 24 Glasgow

3.3 Response to the four designs

3.3.1 Design 4 (alphabetical by party name with additional column of party names)

- this was the best received of all four candidate designs by a clear majority; it was preferred by 55 of the 100 respondents
- it contained the two design elements that most respondents felt made the ballot paper easiest to use:
 - alphabetical listing by party name
 - separate column with party name
- in terms of layout and design it came across as clear, simple and attractive
- many felt this format best showed the candidates and party details and was the easiest ballot to read and navigate

4.3.2 Design 3 (alphabetical by party name without additional column of party names)

- this was generally well received; it was preferred by 19
- it was liked primarily because it used alphabetical listing by party name

- people felt that this made it easier to find candidates by party
- in addition many believed that it made the layout look attractive and ordered
- less positively it did not have the separate column of party names on the left
- as noted, some respondents thought that including the party details underneath candidates' names and addresses gave the main column a muddled appearance

3.3.3 Design 2 (alphabetical by candidate name, with additional column for party name)

- this was the preferred design of the two that used alphabetical listing by candidate name, because it included the additional column for party names (favoured by 16)
- but for most it was let down by the use of alphabetical listing of candidates rather than grouping by party

3.3.4 Design 1 (alphabetical by candidate name, without additional column for party name)

- this was the least well received of all four designs (preferred by 7)
- it came across as disorganised and uninviting because it had the combination of:
 - (perceived) 'random' ordering of candidates
 - party and candidate details in one column

APPENDIX ONE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| SE835 | CONTACT QUESTIONNAIRE | OCT 2006 |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------------|

Name:

Address:

..... Tel:

Sex: Male () Female ()

.....
....
HELLO, I WORK FOR A MARKET RESEARCH COMPANY CALLED CRAGG ROSS DAWSON AND WE ARE CARRYING OUT SOME RESEARCH ON VOTING. MAY I ASK YOU A FEW QUICK QUESTIONS?

QA Could I just check, do you, or any of your close friends or relatives work in any of the following occupations?

- Marketing ()
- Market Research ()
- Advertising ()
- Design ()
- Journalism ()
- Broadcasting ()
- Public Relations ()
- Local or central government ()

CLOSE IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, OTHERWISE GO TO QB.

QB Are you a member of any of the following?

- A political party ()
- The Institute of Advanced Motorists ()
- Forest ()
- Greenpeace ()

CLOSE IF RESPONDENT IS A MEMBER OF A POLITICAL PARTY. OTHERWISE TO QC

QC Have you ever been to a market research group discussion or interview?

Yes () TO QD No () TO Q1

QD How long ago was the last time?

WRITE IN _____

CLOSE IF ATTENDED WITHIN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS.

QE What subject(s) was/were the group(s)/interview(s) on?

WRITE IN _____

CLOSE IF RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH TOPIC. OTHERWISE TO Q1.

Q1 Could you please tell me your age and, if you are working, your occupation?

Age: 16-24 () 25-34 () 35-45 () 46-60 () 61-70+ ()*

*RECRUITERS TO ENSURE A GOOD SPREAD IN THE UPPER AGE RANGE

Occupation

(HoH):.....

SeS: B () C1 () C2 () D () E ()

Q2 Now could you please tell me your country of birth?

(WRITE IN AND SEE QUOTA

.....)

IF BORN IN THE UK OR OTHER COUNTRY ON THE ACCOMPANYING LIST, GO TO Q3.

OTHERWISE CLOSE, DO NOT RECRUIT

Q3a Thinking about qualifications, could you tell me whether you have any Standard grade passes, GCSEs at grade C or above, or O levels at grade 6 or above?

Yes () SEE QUOTA GO TO Q3b

No () GO TO Q4

Q3b How many do you have?

1-4 () SEE QUOTA GO TO Q4

5 or more () SEE QUOTA GO TO Q4

40% OF THE SAMPLE SHOULD HAVE **5 OR MORE** STANDARD GRADE PASSES, GCSEs AT GRADE C OR ABOVE, OR O LEVELS AT GRADE 6 OR ABOVE

60% OF THE SAMPLE SHOULD HAVE **FEWER THAN 5 OR NO** STANDARD GRADE PASSES, GCSEs AT GRADE C OR ABOVE, OR O LEVELS AT GRADE 6 OR ABOVE

Q4 As far as you know, are you eligible to vote in the Scottish Local Elections that are happening next May?

Yes () GO TO Q6
No () GO TO Q5

Q5 You need to be aged 18 by 3rd May 2007 to vote in the 2007 Scottish Local Elections. Will you be old enough?

Yes () GO TO Q6
No () CLOSE. DO NOT RECRUIT

Q6 Do you imagine you will vote in the 2007 Scottish Local Elections next May?

Yes () GO TO Q7
No () CLOSE. DO NOT RECRUIT

Q7a I would like to ask you about your attitudes to political parties. Could you tell me which of the following statements you most agree with?

A *I have no strong feelings about any of the political parties*

B *I tend to think of myself as someone who always votes for the same party*

C *I know which party I am likely to vote for in the Scottish Local elections*

IF RESPONDENT AGREES WITH STATEMENT B OR C, GO TO Q7b.

Q7b Could you tell me which party this is?

(Write in).....

AT LEAST HALF THE SAMPLE SHOULD AGREE WITH STATEMENT B OR C.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT A RANGE OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL PARTIES IS INCLUDED.

A MAXIMUM OF HALF THE SAMPLE CAN AGREE WITH STATEMENT A, OR CAN REFUSE TO NAME A PARTY AT Q7b.
RECRUIT AS APPROPRIATE.

TOPIC GUIDE – 835

Background

(Briefly) Awareness of Scottish local elections and election process. Previous experience of voting (if relevant) and perceptions of the voting procedure.

Response to ballot paper designs (rotate order)

Respondents to be asked to use each ballot paper as if voting in a real election. *Important to reassure respondents that we are not going to ask them about their political allegiances, and that our purpose is to gauge how well the different ballot papers work.*

Researchers in Dundee and Inverness to explain that ward has four seats. Researchers in Glasgow and Edinburgh to explain that ward has three seats.

After using each ballot paper...

- what are their initial impressions?
- what are their overall impressions of the voting process
- is it clear to them who and what they were voting for? *Do not probe, but listen for references to preferred and alternative candidate choices*
- what do they like and dislike about it?
- what stands out about it?
- how easy is it to follow and how easy do they imagine it would be to use in the polling booth (or at home if a postal voter?)
- how clearly does it explain how to use the ballot paper?
- how did they choose how many candidates to put a number against?
- how clear was it they could put down as many preferences as they liked?
- how clear is it that they can choose between candidates from the party they support and of other parties?
- any areas of confusion?

- how could the ballot paper be improved?

What are their views of:

- clarity and comprehension of information provided
 - the separate voters instructions
 - the instructions in the text
 - the instructions at the top of the column(s)
- the layout and overall visual appearance

Comparing the 4 different options, explore

- key differences between the 4 and how they affect comprehension and usability

What are their views of:

- the different number of columns (two vs. three)
- the listing of candidates in alphabetical order compared with listing them by political party. Did they notice this?
- the listing of political parties in alphabetical order compared with listing them with candidates
- the positioning of the party details in an extra column on the left of each list of candidates vs. party details beneath candidate names
- the most effective layout and visual appearance, and the design which makes it easiest to make the right choice
- how clear and helpful the instructions are. Did they notice these when they first saw the ballot paper?

Summing up

All things considered, which do they feel would work best, and why? How could it be improved?

Overall impressions; suggestions for other design approaches or styles, and any other comments

APPENDIX 3 INSTRUCTION SHEETS

How to complete the local government ballot paper [*instructions used in Glasgow and Edinburgh*]

You have been asked to vote in a mock election for a council ward in Aberdeen. The election is using a new type of voting and **three** people will be elected in the ward.

Instead of using a cross, simply rank the candidates on the ballot paper in order of your preference. So put a number '1' in the box to the right of the candidate you want to vote for first, then a '2' by your second choice, '3' by your third choice and so on.

You can rank as many or as few candidates as you like. The candidates you rank can be from the same party, different parties, or be independent candidates (that is, not from a particular party).

If you miss a number out when ranking your choices, for example if you rank 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and miss out 4, only your first three choices will be counted (1, 2 and 3).

This voting system is known as the Single Transferable Vote (STV) and is going to be used in the next council elections in May 2007.

How to complete the local government ballot paper [*instructions used in Dundee and Inverness*]

You have been asked to vote in a mock election for a council ward in Aberdeen. The election is using a new type of voting and **four** people will be elected in the ward.

Instead of using a cross, simply rank the candidates on the ballot paper in order of your preference. So put a number '1' in the box to the right of the candidate you want to vote for first, then a '2' by your second choice, '3' by your third choice and so on.

You can rank as many or as few candidates as you like. The candidates you rank can be from the same party, different parties, or be independent candidates (that is, not from a particular party).

If you miss a number out when ranking your choices, for example if you rank 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and miss out 4, only your first three choices will be counted (1, 2 and 3).

This voting system is known as the Single Transferable Vote (STV) and is going to be used in the next council elections in May 2007.













APPENDIX 4 EXAMPLE BALLOT PAPERS

DESIGN ONE

**Election for Aberdeen City Council
Bridge of Don Ward**

Mark the figure '1' opposite the name of the candidate who is your first choice then mark the figure '2' opposite the name of the candidate who is your second choice and so on. You can mark as many choices as you wish but you must number them in order.

Do not mark your ballot paper with an 'X' or a '✓' or any other mark or symbol













| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Baird, Shiona 9 Heaven's Gate, Clifftop, LN18 4XS SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Canavan, Dennis 14c Love Lane, Linford, LN1 4PD INDEPENDENT</p> | | |
| <p>Fox, Colin 386 Burns Drive, Linford, LN5 7RF SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Goldie, Annabel 55 Camellia Crescent, Linford, LN8 3DK SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Jamieson, Cathy 16 Thames Close, Bromham, AB13 4EF SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Lochhead, Richard 70 Rock Close, Bromham, AB21 12WX SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>MacDonald, Margo 12 Grafton Grove, Bromham, AB12 3CD INDEPENDENT</p> | | |
| <p>McConnell, Jack 24 Wallace Walk, Linford, LN4 9BY SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>McLetchie, David 94 Highland Grove, Bromham, AB18 9QR SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Peacock, Peter 6 South Africa Road, Horwood, N1 3FG SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Stephen, Nicol 25 Trebor Road, Horwood, N1 9TV SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</p> |  | |
| <p>Sturgeon, Nicola 6 Sea Grove, Horwood, N1 6MN SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Swinney, John 6 Post Office Grove, Bigtown, KL1 6MN SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  | |
| <p>Wallace, Jim 6 South Road, Bigtown, KL1 3FG SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</p> |  | |

DESIGN TWO

**Election for Aberdeen City Council
Bridge of Don Ward**

Mark the figure '1' opposite the name of the candidate who is your first choice then mark the figure '2' opposite the name of the candidate who is your second choice and so on. You can mark as many choices as you wish but you must number them in order.

Do not mark your ballot paper with an 'X' or a '✓' or any other mark or symbol













| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY | Baird, Shiona 9 Heaven's Gate, Clifftop, LN18 4XS |  | |
| INDEPENDENT | Canavan, Dennis 14c Love Lane, Linford, LN1 4PD | | |
| SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY | Fox, Colin 386 Burns Drive, Linford, LN5 7RF |  | |
| SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY | Goldie, Annabel 55 Camellia Crescent, Linford, LN8 3DK |  | |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | Jamieson, Cathy 16 Thames Close, Bromham, AB13 4EF |  | |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Lochhead, Richard 70 Rock Close, Bromham, AB21 12WX |  | |
| INDEPENDENT | MacDonald, Margo 12 Grafton Grove, Bromham, AB12 3CD | | |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | McConnell, Jack 24 Wallace Walk, Linford, LN4 9BY |  | |
| SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY | McLetchie, David 94 Highland Grove, Bromham, AB18 9QR |  | |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | Peacock, Peter 6 South Africa Road, Horwood, N1 3FG |  | |
| SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS | Stephen, Nicol 25 Trebor Road, Horwood, N1 9TV |  | |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Sturgeon, Nicola 6 Sea Grove, Horwood, N1 6MN |  | |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Swinney, John 6 Post Office Grove, Bigtown, KL1 6MN |  | |
| SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS | Wallace, Jim 6 South Road, Bigtown, KL1 3FG |  | |

DESIGN THREE

Election for Aberdeen City Council Bridge of Don Ward

Mark the figure '1' opposite the name of the candidate who is your first choice then mark the figure '2' opposite the name of the candidate who is your second choice and so on. You can mark as many choices as you wish but you must number them in order.

Do not mark your ballot paper with an 'X' or a '✓' or any other mark or symbol













| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Canavan, Dennis 14c Love Lane, Linford, LN1 4PD INDEPENDENT</p> | |
| <p>MacDonald, Margo 12 Grafton Grove, Bromham, AB12 3CD INDEPENDENT</p> | |
| <p>Goldie, Annabel 55 Camellia Crescent, Linford, LN8 3DK SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>McLetchie, David 94 Highland Grove, Bromham, AB18 9QR SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Baird, Shiona 9 Heaven's Gate, Clifftop, LN18 4XS SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Jamieson, Cathy 16 Thames Close, Bromham, AB13 4EF SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>McConnell, Jack 24 Wallace Walk, Linford, LN4 9BY SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Peacock, Peter 6 South Africa Road, Horwood, N1 3FG SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Stephen, Nicol 25 Trebor Road, Horwood, N1 9TV SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</p> |  |
| <p>Wallace, Jim 6 South Road, Bigtown, KL1 3FG SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</p> |  |
| <p>Lochhead, Richard 70 Rock Close, Bromham, AB21 12WX SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Sturgeon, Nicola 6 Sea Grove, Horwood, N1 6MN SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Swinney, John 6 Post Office Grove, Bigtown, KL1 6MN SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY</p> |  |
| <p>Fox, Colin 386 Burns Drive, Linford, LN5 7RF SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY</p> |  |

DESIGN FOUR

**Election for Aberdeen City Council
Bridge of Don Ward**

Mark the figure '1' opposite the name of the candidate who is your first choice then mark the figure '2' opposite the name of the candidate who is your second choice and so on. You can mark as many choices as you wish but you must number them in order.

Do not mark your ballot paper with an 'X' or a '✓' or any other mark or symbol

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| INDEPENDENT | Canavan, Dennis 14c Love Lane, Linford, LN1 4PD | |
| INDEPENDENT | MacDonald, Margo 12 Grafton Grove, Bromham, AB12 3CD | |
| SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY | Goldie, Annabel 55 Camellia Crescent, Linford, LN8 3DK |  |
| SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY | McLetchie, David 94 Highland Grove, Bromham, AB18 9QR |  |
| SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY | Baird, Shiona 9 Heaven's Gate, Clifftop, LN18 4XS |  |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | Jamieson, Cathy 16 Thames Close, Bromham, AB13 4EF |  |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | McConnell, Jack 24 Wallace Walk, Linford, LN4 9BY |  |
| SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY | Peacock, Peter 6 South Africa Road, Horwood, N1 3FG |  |
| SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS | Stephen, Nicol 25 Trebor Road, Horwood, N1 9TV |  |
| SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS | Wallace, Jim 6 South Road, Bigtown, KL1 3FG |  |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Lochhead, Richard 70 Rock Close, Bromham, AB21 12WX |  |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Sturgeon, Nicola 6 Sea Grove, Horwood, N1 6MN |  |
| SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY | Swinney, John 6 Post Office Grove, Bigtown, KL1 6MN |  |
| SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY | Fox, Colin 386 Burns Drive, Linford, LN5 7RF |  |

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