

APPENDIX 1

Draft rules for local government (principal council) elections using the single transferable vote system

CONSULTATION RESPONSE – DRAFT

Q1a. Do you agree that the draft STV Rules should only include the option of manual counting, omitting the option of electronic counting?

Comments:

In terms of practical electoral administration implementing a counting method such as STV should only realistically be considered when used in conjunction with a bespoke electronic count system due to the complexity of calculating first preference and transferred votes.

Nevertheless, as such a system is not being rolled out on an all-Wales basis and would likely result in exceptionally high costs to implement, coupled with the fact that the 2021 Act does not apply to Town and Community Council elections, we concur that manual counting would be the only practicable solution, but would still result in severe administrative and logistic difficulties for any council looking to implement.

Q1b. Should the rules that allow for electronic counting be prepared for future elections, in time for local elections held after 2027?

Comments:

Agree, if a solution such as STV is to be progressed as a realistic and successful count method alternative after 2027 then the option to introduce a possible electronic counting solution needs to be available as a potential option for Returning Officers.

Q2. Do you agree that the current requirement to list candidates alphabetically by surname should not be changed?

Comments:

This is a matter for Welsh Government and we offer no specific comment other than to confirm that the current requirement to list candidates in alphabetical surname order remains straightforward to administer and is clearly understood by candidates, agents and electors.

APPENDIX 1

Q3. Do you agree that the guidance to voters explains clearly how they should mark the ballot paper in an election under STV? If no, please suggest improvements.

Comments:

Agree, although we would encourage that any such new guidance is thoroughly evaluated by the Electoral Commission and appropriately focus group tested.

Q4a. Do you agree with our choice of the Droop quota?

Comments:

This is a matter for Welsh Government and we offer no specific comment.

Q4b. Do you agree that the steps for calculating the quota as set out in Rule 60H and 64L sufficiently clear?

Comments:

We agree that the relevant steps for calculating the quota as set out in Rule 60H and 64L appear sufficiently clear.

Q5. Do you agree that the rules about the transfer of surplus votes are sufficiently clear?

Comments:

We agree that the relevant rules around the transfer of surplus votes appear sufficiently clear and understandable.

Q6. Do you agree the transfer of surplus votes should not take place where it cannot make any material difference to the prospects of the continuing candidate with the lowest number of votes?

Comments:

Yes, we agree with this common sense principle.

APPENDIX 1

Q7. Do you agree that the rules about the exclusion of candidates and the subsequent transfer of votes are sufficiently clear?

Comments:

Yes, we agree that the rules around the exclusion of candidates and the subsequent transfer of votes based on the draft regulation text are sufficiently clear.

Q8. Do you agree that the draft STV Rules are sufficiently clear about the circumstances under which a ballot paper becomes non-transferable?

Comments:

We agree that the draft STV rules are sufficiently clear in relation to the circumstances under which a ballot paper becomes non-transferable.

Q9. Do you agree that the draft STV Rules are sufficiently clear about the provision for filling last vacancies?

Comments:

We agree that the draft STV rules are clear in relation to the provision for filling casual vacancies.

Q10. Do you agree that in elections conducted using STV, a re-count may be requested in respect of the last completed stage of the count only?

Comments:

We agree with this common sense principle.

APPENDIX 1

Q11. We would like to know your views on the effects that the draft STV rules would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Comments:

We believe the relevant rules would likely have neutral impacts in relation to the Welsh language.

Q12. Please also explain how you believe the rules could be changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Comments:

We believe the relevant rules would likely have neutral effects in relation to the Welsh language.

Q13. We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Comments:

We have no additional comments to make at this time in relation to this consultation exercise.

Organisation:

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