This paper follows earlier evidence given to the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Regeneration Committee on 28th November 2012 based on research carried out and published on the 2012 local elections (Clark 2013). For reasons of space, this submission focuses particularly on issues around voter turnout, diversity, election timing and ballot paper rotation.

1. **Turnout**

1.1 At 39.8% Scottish local turnout in 2012 compares well with English local elections held on the same day where turnout was 31.1% and 29% in the concurrent Mayoral Referendums. This is not to suggest complacency around turnout; only to highlight that Scotland performed better than its immediate neighbour in this regard. The single largest explanation for Scottish turnout declining was that the local elections were no longer held concurrently with Scottish parliamentary elections.

1.2 The problem of declining turnout has been evident in numerous advanced industrial democracies. Typically a number of reasons are given to explain this. These include: attitudes; political factors; and social structure. These explanations can all be found in Scotland.

1.3 While a lot is said about political apathy and disillusionment, a key thing driving whether people will turnout to vote or not is whether they feel their vote will make a difference in the first place. The established notion is that people will turn out if they a) feel their vote will make a difference and b) think that they will benefit to some degree by doing so (Dowding, 2005).

1.4 Local elections are typically seen as ‘second order’ elections where less is at stake than in national parliamentary elections. This can be unintentionally compounded by political rhetoric and policies, leading some to suggest that voters can see local elections as ‘irrelevant’ (Miller, 1988). For example, while a council tax freeze imposed at the national level may be welcomed by voters, the implicit message this can send is that it is the national institution that is decisive, not the local institution. Yet often blame for any consequent reduction in services is targeted at the local council, not national government. Similarly, evidence from Europe shows that talk of councils merging services in the name of efficiency can have a negative impact on trust and participation in local government (Hansen, 2012).

1.5 Some have suggested that the introduction of STV may have put voters off. There is no evidence for this. Comparative research has shown that electoral systems per se are neither responsible for increasing or decreasing turnout, whatever proponents and opponents of various systems might argue.

1.6 Other political factors are likely to be more important. An established research literature points to higher levels of turnout being associated with areas where local party campaigns are stronger and most in evidence. Denver et al. (2004) found that, depending on the strength of campaign, constituency turnout could have increased by as much as 2.9 per cent in 1992, 4.4 per cent in party target seats in 1997, and 4.6 percentage points in 2001. Clark (2006b) suggests that even where turnout declines, stronger local campaigns
can also prevent turnout from falling further. Such effects have also been found in local elections.

1.7 Experimental evidence in one Manchester constituency in 2005 demonstrated that traditional doorstep and telephone canvassing are both successful in encouraging voters to turnout when conducted by a non-partisan organisation. This evidence suggests that effects from such mobilising activity in a single election can potentially be anywhere between 3-7%, but that having been encouraged to vote in one election, voting becomes habit forming in subsequent elections (Cutts et al., 2009).

1.8 During the 2012 local elections almost two-thirds (21) of Scottish councils restricted the amount of publicly displayed campaign literature – posters etc – from parties. This is hardly a good way of publicising an election. Given the established relationship between campaign activity, strength and turnout, this would seem to have been particularly costly in relation to participation and should be addressed for 2017.

1.9 There are difficulties here for Scottish political parties. Party organisation and campaigns in Scotland are marked by their weakness by comparison with levels of local party and membership size in other countries. Clark (2006a, b; 2007; 2008; 2012; Clark and Bennie 2008) discusses levels of Scottish party organisation and campaign activity. While campaigns have been modernized in recent years, Scotland's party members only account for around 1% of the electorate, well behind many other comparable countries.

1.10 Denver and Hands (2004) found a relationship between social structure and turnout when examining wards and constituencies in the 2003 local and parliamentary elections. Typically, turnout is lower in cities and less affluent areas, higher in suburban, rural and more affluent areas (Clark, 2005; Denver and Bochel 2007). Three of Scotland’s main cities were at the bottom end of turnout in 2012, with Glasgow recording 32.3 per cent, Aberdeen 33.4 per cent and Dundee 35.9 per cent. The highest mainland turnout was 48.2 per cent in East Renfrewshire, followed by Argyll and Bute with 46.6 per cent and East Dunbartonshire with 45.5 per cent (Clark, 2013).

1.11 Lowest ward turnouts were found in relatively affluent Aberdeen with George Street/Harbour on 20.5% and Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen on 21.9%. While not the most affluent areas of the city, why these should have lower turnout than wards in other considerably more deprived urban areas requires further research. It may be because these areas have relatively itinerant populations – students etc – and this may speak to the need to increase the ability to engage with and register such communities. The highest ward turnouts were found in the islands, with 64 per cent in Shetland West the greatest turnout in these elections. By contrast, the highest mainland turnout was 54.7 in Dee ward in Dumfries and Galloway council.

1.12 One aspect of social structure has merited considerable interest. This is the extension of the vote to 16-17 year olds in the 2014 referendum and the likely effect this may have if extended to local elections.

1.13 While there may be valid reasons for extending the vote to 16-17 year olds, evidence shows that the young are the least likely group to vote. This is consistent across a range of countries and institutional levels (Fieldhouse et al, 2007). There is therefore considerable scepticism over the potential turnout benefits of lowering the voting age. Cowley and
Denver (2005: 58) observe that this would lead to the electorate being enlarged by another group disproportionately likely to vote with the consequence that ‘if anything is certain about what will happen if the voting age is lowered … it is that in the next election turnout would be lower than it would otherwise have been’.

2. **Diversity**

2.1 Advocates of STV have argued that its use is likely to increase the diversity of both candidates and of those elected. STV’s use in both parts of Ireland suggests that this argument is mistaken (e.g. Galligan, 2008). This has been borne out in both rounds of STV elections in Scotland. The proportion of women candidates in 2007 was 22.8%, rising marginally to 23.4% in 2012. For comparison the last FPTP elections in 2003 had 27.7% women candidates. In 2003 and 2007 the proportion of women councillors elected was 21.8, rising slightly to 24.3% in 2012 (Denver et al., 2012; Kenny & McKay, 2012).

2.2 Electoral systems can be more or less permissive towards the goal of increasing diversity. Since STV is a candidate-based system, where voters can choose individual candidates regardless of their party affiliation, STV is potentially at the more permissive end of the spectrum, particularly where individual candidates can build a local profile independent of party.

2.3 The single thing that will lead to greater diversity is political parties adopting their internal candidate selection procedures to enable a greater number of women and ethnic minority candidates to be selected in wards where they will be likely to do well. Short of a broader shift in political culture, to achieve this many have argued that the only effective way is for parties to adopt quotas for certain categories of candidates.

2.4 With the exception of the Labour Party’s twinning and zipping practices early in the devolved period, Scottish parties have proven reluctant to adopt such methods. Labour at the British level however regularly utilise all-women shortlists (AWS). These have proven successful in expanding the party’s gender balance, and have not had the negative electoral effect that many critics have suggested (Cutts and Widdop, 2012).

2.5 The Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 permits political parties to adopt such measures with the view to extending the diversity of representatives. This act applies in Scotland and for local elections. It could therefore be utilised by Scottish political parties to address gender diversity in local elections. Whether parties wish to do so is a matter for their own internal processes.

2.6 An alternative that some parties have begun experimenting with is to hold selections through local primaries. While an interesting new approach, the use of primaries has to date been on a relatively small scale, and their effectiveness in achieving greater diversity remains uncertain.

3. **Robson Rotation**

3.1 Perhaps the most commented upon problem with the two STV elections held so far has been the existence of ballot position effects. The argument is that the higher up the ballot paper a candidate is, the better they are likely to do in terms of both attracting first preference votes, and ultimately in being elected.

3.2 The argument has revolved around the issue of perceived fairness to mainstream party candidates, with those often further down the ballot paper often considering their prospects to be unfairly hindered by alphabetical ordering. Where parties offered two or
more candidates to electors in 2007 and 2012, these effects are clearly evident and in a manner that is the result of more than chance. These effects appear to be, if anything, getting stronger, with a roughly 60/40 split between higher and lower candidates in 2007, becoming a roughly 80/20 split between them in 2012 (Denver et al., 2009; Denver et al., 2012). It should nevertheless be noted that in both 2007 and 2012 sizeable minorities of lower candidates were still elected.

3.3 Typically ‘low information’ elections, such as local elections, are thought to lead to a higher incidence of ballot position effects (Bagley, 1965; Ho and Imai, 2008; Johnston and Miles, 2011; Koppell and Steen, 2004; Webber et al., 2012).

3.4 The debate on ballot position effects has been conducted almost solely in relation to the interests of party candidates who have running mates. Absent from the discussion has been consideration of the needs of all candidates, not just those standing for parties. Also evident has been the absence of any debate regarding how electors use their vote. This is all the more important given the Gould Report’s point in relation to an earlier change to Scottish parliament ballot papers that led to large numbers of rejected ballots in 2007. Gould noted that ‘almost without exception, the voter was treated as an afterthought by virtually all the other stakeholders’ (Electoral Commission, 2007: 120).

3.5 Until both points are much better understood, it is contended that the current evidence of ballot position effects remains evidence of a correlation, but not of causation. Further research is required before it is possible to say anything conclusive about causation, but this is necessary if any changes to the ballot paper are not to lead to further unforeseen difficulties in an echo of the events leading up to 2007.

3.6 Alternative evidence provides a different perspective. In total, only 2.1 per cent (N=1301) of respondents to an Electoral Commission survey of candidates and agents highlighted concerns about alphabetical ballot paper listing being unfair and the need for ballot paper randomisation.¹ By party, this response was given by four Labour respondents, 14 from the SNP, five Conservatives and one Liberal Democrat, with the remaining three being either small party or independent candidates.

3.7 Dissatisfied candidates appear to mainly have been candidates who failed to win a seat; only two Labour respondents, five SNP respondents and the one Liberal Democrat who suggested ballot position effects were an issue won a seat. Dissatisfied respondents were experienced candidates; only three (one Labour, two SNP) indicated that 2012 was their first election.

3.8 A simple correlation between the ballot paper position of all candidates in 2012 and the number of first preference votes shows a coefficient of -0.200. This is statistically significant, indicating that the relationship is not simply down to chance (Clark, 2013). It is nevertheless a relatively weak correlation, suggesting that there may be other factors involved in the relationship between ballot paper position and first preference votes received.

3.9 A number of factors contribute to voting behaviour. These include: party allegiance; incumbency; candidate allegiances; community influences; economic and competence

¹ By contrast, at 9.2 per cent (N=1301), the most often given response revolved around the impression that the new system was confusing and voters were still voting with crosses instead of preferences.
voting; and ‘second order’ effects. These factors can all be found in explaining the outcomes of local elections (Clark and Krebs, 2012).

3.10 The necessary data to test many of these explanations are not currently available, either because an election survey would be required to examine how individual voters used their vote, or because, in the aggregate data reported by local councils, issues such as incumbency are seldom reported. Further research is therefore necessary.

3.11 It is nevertheless possible to get some insight into the complex relationship between ballot paper position, party and incumbency by examining aggregate ward-level data on the 2012 elections from one major council who did report these indicators. Edinburgh City Council provided a summary for each of its seventeen wards, where candidate, party, incumbency and number of first preference votes were clearly identified (see table in appendix).

3.12 Where those who achieved most first preferences had running mates, six times out of seven, and therefore reflective of the broader balance throughout Scotland noted earlier, they were placed above them on the ballot paper.

3.13 When the relationship between most first preferences with all wards and all candidates is considered (i.e. including wards where candidates did not have running mates), the relationship is much weaker. By this measure, being higher on the ballot paper seems only to have been an advantage in just over half of all wards, with just under half being in the bottom half of the ballot paper.

3.14 Importantly, in 14 of the 17 wards in Edinburgh, the candidate achieving most first preferences was an incumbent councillor. Some of these candidates, such as former Lord Provosts Eric Milligan and Lesley Hinds, have had extremely prominent positions, while others have also built up good local reputations for their work as councillors. Although Hinds had no running mate, it is hard to argue that Milligan was advantaged by being above his co-partisan on the ballot paper, or that his running mate was disadvantaged by being lower.

3.15 While the data do not permit individual-level voter analyses, it is hard to see that incumbency was not at least as important, if not in many cases more so, than ballot paper position in achieving success. Incumbency also appears to have a broader effect. Once the outcome of the transfer and counting process is taken into account, more than half (31) of Edinburgh’s 58 councillors from 2012 were also former councillors.

3.16 Assessment of Edinburgh City Council in the 2012 local elections highlights the potential importance and complexity of a number of factors in determining voting outcomes under STV. These include not just ballot paper position, but also incumbency. It is also evident that party loyalties had a considerable effect.

3.17 A form of ballot paper rotation, usually referred to as Robson Rotation, is often suggested as a way of resolving the ballot paper position problem. This is not widely used, but has been utilised in Tasmania since 1979. It is also used in Australian Capital Territory assembly elections. Robson rotation provides multiple versions of the ballot paper with each candidate name appearing an equal number of times in ‘favoured’ positions on the ballot paper such as at the top and bottom. This means that voters completing their ballot paper in ‘linear’ fashion, sequentially downwards, are likely to give candidates the same chance of receiving their preferences.
3.18 Importantly, ballot papers are also printed so that consecutive papers each have the candidates in different orders (Hawkey, 2008: 2). Not only the order of ballot positions, but also the order of the ballot papers themselves are randomised. The argument is that with modern technology, and the experience of e-counting already embedded in Scotland’s STV elections, it should be relatively straightforward and inexpensive to implement such a system.

3.19 In practice the complexities are considerable. In the 2007 and 2012 rounds of Scottish local elections, the number of candidates per ward averaged around 7, with a maximum of 14. Tasmanian work has shown the number of ballot paper permutations involved in randomising between 5 to 8 candidates. This rises exponentially with each extra candidate. With 5 candidates on the ballot paper, 120 rotations are required. With 6, this rises to 720, with 7 to 5,040 and with 8 to 40,320 (Hawkey, 2008: 6). With more than 8 candidates, the number of rotations required will be somewhat, and increasingly, larger.

3.20 Tasmanian practice has, understandably, adopted a reduced number of rotations depending on the size of the ballot paper. In a 7 candidate constituency, this still requires 420 different versions of the ballot paper however. The average ward electorate in Scotland in 2012 was around 11,850. Assuming an average ward with an average number of candidates, this would appear to require a different ballot paper for roughly every 28 people registered to vote in a ward.

3.21 Robson rotation was developed to deal with a specific problem, that of ‘donkey voting’, or voters completing the ballot paper sequentially from 1 to \( n \) due to the Australian system’s compulsion to complete a certain number of preferences. This seems to help. A survey of ballot papers in two constituencies in the 2006 Tasmanian Assembly elections suggested that those voting for one party’s candidates sequentially was only 8%, while for the 1998 Australian Capital Territory election, it was 22.6% (Farrell and McAllister, 2006; Hawkey, 2008).

3.22 ‘Donkey voting’ is not the issue in Scotland, it is the difficulty of party candidates winning fewer first preferences and seats than their running mates whose surname begins with a higher letter of the alphabet. Moreover, most parties tend to offer more than one candidate in Australia, which is not necessarily the case in Scotland. Consequently Robson Rotation would be an overly complex solution to answer a different question than it was designed for.

3.23 Gould (2007) suggested an alternative approach. This would be for a public lottery to determine positions on the ballot paper, but then have all ballot papers in that constituency the same. There are numerous various other options that could be examined.

3.24 Rotation does not seem to fully resolve the issue however. Ballot paper effects are still found on rotated ballot papers, albeit to a different degree in different contexts. Typically, this appears to disadvantage candidates placed at the top or bottom of the ballot paper, in favour of those placed in a central position on the paper (Bagley, 1965; Johnson and Miles, 2011). In a different context, Koppell and Steen (2004) noted that even where ballot papers were rotated by New York City precinct, similar to Gould’s (2007) suggestion, being higher on the ballot paper was still an advantage.

3.25 The Tasmanian survey found that party and incumbency also remained crucial. Taking party first, 76.8% were giving preferences to all of one party’s candidates before giving any preferences to another party (Hawkey, 2008). A recent experimental British
study of ballot position effects has likewise suggested that party remains a crucial factor in vote choice, even where ballot papers have been rotated (Johnson and Miles, 2011: 487).

3.26 Evidence from California has suggested that party may matter in a different way where ballot papers are randomised in state-wide elections. Ho and Imai (2008) found that while major parties tended not to benefit from rotation, the main beneficiaries were minor parties and that this was a robust pattern across all Californian statewide elections from 1978-2002.

3.27 In terms of incumbency, according to the Tasmanian study, stronger candidates received three times the number of linear votes as those receiving less votes, while an assessment of a 2007 Tasmanian legislative council division also suggested that stronger candidates benefited by twice as much. This implies that many voters have a deliberate preference for one party candidate over another (Hawkey, 2008; 7-8). It is reasonable to assume, from the Scottish viewpoint and on the evidence above, that stronger candidates will be incumbents. This suggests that where parties offer more than one candidate, a sizeable proportion of candidates will remain considerably disadvantaged by running alongside an incumbent. As Hawkey (2008: 7) suggests this ‘counter(s) the assumption that all party linear voting is random and can therefore be equally shared between candidates by Robson rotation’.

3.28 Critics often appear to suggest that STV is the only electoral system in which ballot paper effects are present. This is mistaken. Other electoral systems also suffer from ballot position effects. Bagley (1965) identifies both alphabetical and positional effects in British general elections. Recent extensive research on British local elections from 1973-2011 (including Scottish local elections up to 2003) by Webber et al. (2012: 16) concludes that ‘there is clear evidence of alphabetic bias even for the simplest ballots where only one person is to be elected and where there are very few other candidates’. While this rises with ballot complexity, these elections were primarily held under first past the post rules. STV is therefore very far from being the only system with such effects.

3.29 A further issue relates to the difficulties that any rotation may cause to certain groups of voters, particularly disabled, visually impaired or other voters who may have problems with reading ballot papers. Evidence to the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Regeneration Committee in November 2012 by Dr. James Gilmour suggests that how ballot paper ordering may currently impact upon such voters is unknown, nor is there widespread knowledge of how rotation may impact such voters. Alphabetical ordering is well understood. However, rotation is likely to add a level of complication for such voters which suggests yet a further need for caution. In the aim of benefiting some candidates, it would seem somewhat problematic to complicate further the electoral process for voters with such impairments.

3.30 It is quite possible that rotation could be carried out satisfactorily, although at minimum this would need extensive and repeated testing and detailed costings. Deciding upon the need for change in Scottish local government ballot papers is ultimately a political decision. The imperative for ballot paper rotation would appear to be being driven by the perceived needs of candidates in political parties which offered more than one candidate in a ward.

3.31 Any solution needs to reflect the needs of all candidates, not just major party candidates. It also needs to reflect the needs of voters. It may be that the choice made by those voters in 2007 and 2012 reflected their genuine choice of candidates. The key is to
acknowledge uncertainty, both about how voters choose under STV, and what the potential outcomes for any rotation of ballot papers may be. The evidence cited earlier suggests potentially multiple influences.

3.32 Under such conditions, the need for proceeding with considerable caution is paramount. In an assessment that would seem to have relevance to the Scottish case, Johnson and Miles (2011: 489) suggest that after their large scale experimental study that ‘full positional counterbalancing (i.e. rotation) would be both logistically and financially problematic, especially considering the potential limited scope of the problem’.

3.33 The danger is a repeat of the 2007 Scottish parliament ballot paper problem because the issue is not fully understood either in terms of its cause or likely outcome. Since what appears to be driving this is the perceived interest of some party candidates, any such outcome would be likely to land at the door of political parties, potentially further undermining trust in Scottish local government and electoral processes when what it needs is to be considerably bolstered if interest in local elections is to be rekindled.

4. Election Timing

4.1 The Gould Report (2007) indicated a preference for standalone local government elections. The next three rounds of Scottish local government elections are currently scheduled to take place in May 2017, May 2021 and May 2025. The next two rounds will be standalone contests. Assuming that elections to Westminster remain on a five year fixed term as introduced by the Coalition government and that Scotland remains part of the UK in the aftermath of the 2014 referendum, this means that in 2025 Scottish local government elections will be scheduled concurrently with Westminster elections.

4.2 The separation of the Scottish parliament and local government elections was always likely to have a consequence in relation to turnout for the 2012 elections. Typically, when held concurrently with elections for ‘first order’ institutions, local election turnout is higher than when held separately (Clark and Krebs, 2012). This is what happened in Scotland in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

4.3 Arguments for holding the elections concurrently relate to increased turnout, and reducing the cost of elections. Party organisations also benefit, achieving ‘spillover’ effects between different institutional levels (Clark, 2012). Arguments against primarily revolve around the inability to focus on specifically local government issues and candidates during concurrent campaigns, since the natural focus is the ‘higher-level’ institution. Holding standalone local government elections is therefore a way of focusing on the local government, holding it and councillors democratically accountable for their performance.

4.4 Some evidence suggests that the local elections were more widely reported in the press than in the previous concurrent rounds between 1999-2003. This suggests that one of the intended aims of decoupling – greater scrutiny of local government – was to some extent achieved in 2012 (Denver et al., 2012).

4.5 Election timing can be considered in additional ways. The first relates to the day on which elections are held. By convention, in the UK this has been on Thursdays. Other countries hold elections on other days, often over a weekend. Some argue that weekend elections might increase turnout since they do not conflict with voters’ work and other commitments. It is difficult to point to evidence that would conclusively point to weekend elections having a beneficial impact. Small scale experiments were held in some local UK contexts in 2000 with voting on Saturday and Sunday. According to Leonard and Mortimore
(2005: 8) these ‘were not a conspicuous success’ and turnout fell. Any such change would need to be accompanied by an extensive public education campaign and to take into account religious sensibilities.

4.6 Recent UK practice has seen elections for all levels of institution held in either May or June. The arguments are that this period is one of the few which is likely to be free from overlapping holiday periods and/or bad weather which may impact upon campaigning and turnout (Leonard and Mortimore, 2005: 8).

4.7 The only other period in which major elections have tended to be scheduled in the UK is in early Autumn, typically October-early November. It is not possible to state with any confidence what effect this might have on turnout. It may be possible to examine this through local by-elections held later on in the year, subject to the caveat that turnout tends to be lower in by-elections to begin with, and that this data would need to be collected (it is unlikely to be easily accessible) and analysed.

4.8 It may be possible to move the local elections to a different month but held in the same year as another ‘first order’ election. This may reduce potential clashes and have some benefits in relation to wider political debate. The danger would be that having two elections in one year could lead to ‘voter fatigue’ and add to demands on electoral administrators. The ordering of such elections would be vital, with local elections held before the ‘first order’ elections potentially helping build public interest for the later contest.

4.9 A further issue relating to election timing requires consideration. Advance voting has recently received some commentary due to its high-profile use in the American Presidential elections. It is used in a number of diverse jurisdictions, including many American states, across Europe and Australasia. Advance voting is organised in different ways, with some countries (e.g. Sweden) permitting voting in a variety of publicly-owned or municipal buildings, others permitting postal voting in advance, and others being more restrictive allowing voting only at the offices of a specified electoral body.

4.10 One summary of advance voting has suggested this accounts now for up to 30% of how the American electorate now votes (Gronke et al 2008, also Gronke et al, 2007). Their research further suggests that advance voting effects on turnout are modest, adding on average around 2-4% to turnout, although in some cases it has not benefited turnout at all. They point to the potential for a novelty effect, whereby new methods of advance voting sees turnout rise, before falling back again. They raise a number of key issues regarding advance voting which remain unclear. These include the potential for fraud and ballot security; voters deciding on unequal information; campaign effects; and the costs involved.

4.11 The main form of advance voting in the UK has been postal voting. Rallings et al (2010) suggest that this has led to many people voting as soon as their ballot paper arrives (noting that at the 2004 North East Referendum, 2/3 of votes cast were received at least a week before polling day), and also had a consequent impact on how parties campaign. Little partisan effect is observed but they indicate that postal voting is habit forming; those who had previous postal voting experience were more likely to do so again in the 2005 general election. Finally, they note that in the 2008 English local elections, only 29% of in-person voters cast a ballot. This contrasted with 70% of postal voters who did so. A similar proportion of postal voters in Scotland went on to cast their postal ballot in 2012 (69.7%) (Electoral Commission 2012).
Many of the issues around postal voting are well known. If advance voting, whether postal or otherwise, is pursued, then a range of issues will need to be considered. These include: the potential for fraud and ballot security; the staffing and funding of electoral administration, and the ability of party organisations and candidates, to deal with earlier demands; and consideration of the whole elections timetable from nomination to count as set out in legislation.

**Recommendations**

- The need to engage with and register hard to reach voters throughout the electoral cycle
- Develop and resource measures, where possible given the Scottish parliament’s competence, to encourage both political party and non-partisan campaigns to be more in evidence in local elections
- Encourage parties to revisit their candidate selection processes if diversity is to have any prospect of being achieved
- Proceed with considerable caution with regard to the cause of ballot position effects and potential consequences of ballot paper rotation, with any such reform, if deemed necessary, requiring extensive and repeated testing and detailed costings
- Examine the potential for further developing advance and postal voting, subject to appropriate safeguards.
Sources


## Appendix

### Table 2: Party, incumbency and ballot position, Edinburgh City Council 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Candidate with most FPs (Party)</th>
<th>Ballot position</th>
<th>No. FPs</th>
<th>Ballot paper 1st position</th>
<th>Above party running mate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almond</td>
<td>Work* (SNP)</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>2722</td>
<td>Dunworth (Green) Fitzpatrick (Lab)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Centre</td>
<td>Mowat* (Con)</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>1402</td>
<td>Coleman (Lib Dems)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colinton/Fairmilehead</td>
<td>Rust * (Con)</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>2692</td>
<td>Aitken* (Con)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corstorphine/Murrayfield</td>
<td>Balfour* (Con)</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigentinny/Duddingston</td>
<td>Tymkewycz* (SNP)</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>2180</td>
<td>Ferguson (Anti-Cuts) Griffiths (Lab)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drum Brae/Gyle</td>
<td>Keil (Lab)</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Aldridge* (Lib Dems)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth</td>
<td>Day* (Lab)</td>
<td>2/9</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>Cardownie* (SNP)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart</td>
<td>Corbett (Green)</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Burns* (Lab)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverleith</td>
<td>Hinds* (Lab)</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>2751</td>
<td>Bagshaw (Green) Barrie (SNP)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leith</td>
<td>Munro* (Lab)</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Booth (Green) McMinn (Liberal) McVey (SNP)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leith Walk</td>
<td>Brock* (SNP)</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>Blacklock* (Lab)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberton/Gilmerton</td>
<td>Austin Hart* (Lab)</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadows/Morningside</td>
<td>McInnes* (Con)</td>
<td>7/7</td>
<td>3125</td>
<td>Dawe* (Lib Dems)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentland Hills</td>
<td>Henderson (SNP)</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>2317</td>
<td>Bridges (Lib Dems)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portobello/Craigmillar</td>
<td>Child* (Lab)</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>2645</td>
<td>Bridgman* (SNP)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighthill/Gorgie</td>
<td>Milligan* (Lab)</td>
<td>6/7</td>
<td>2266</td>
<td>Ashford (Green) Dewhurst (Con)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside/Newington</td>
<td>Burgess* (Green)</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Black (Anti-Cuts) Lea (Liberal) Mackenzie* (Lib Dems)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * indicates an incumbent councillor. FPs = first preference votes. In the ‘ballot paper 1st position’ column, where the first listed candidate is from a small party or an independent, the second or, where that is also from a small party or independent, third placed candidate on the ballot paper is also identified.