



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Election Day

Weekend Voting

March 2010



Election Day

Weekend Voting

Presented to Parliament
by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
by Command of Her Majesty

March 2010

© Crown Copyright 2010

The text in this document (excluding the Royal Arms and other departmental or agency logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the document specified.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

For any other use of this material please contact the Office of Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or e-mail: licensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk

ISBN: 9780101783521

Printed in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited
on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ID P002353638 03/10

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum.

Contents

Introduction and contact details	3
Background	4
Summary of responses	5
Responses to specific questions	7
Conclusions and next steps	23
Consultation Co-ordinator contact details	25
The consultation criteria	26
Annex A – List of respondents	27
Impact assessment	35

Introduction and contact details

This document is the post-consultation report for the Ministry of Justice consultation paper, '**Election Day: Weekend Voting**'. The consultation paper was issued on 24 June 2008 and responses were requested by 26 September 2008.

Responses were welcomed from anyone with an interest in, or views on, the subjects raised in the paper. A copy of the consultation was placed on the Ministry of Justice website and a range of bodies were specifically consulted. These included: the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators [AEA], local authorities and Electoral Registration Officers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives [SOLACE], the Local Government Association, political parties, the devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, faith groups, voluntary sector organisations and civil society groups, the Royal Mail and the Police.

This post-consultation report sets out:

- the background to the consultation;
- a summary of the responses to the consultation;
- a detailed response to the specific questions raised in the consultation; and
- conclusions and next steps following this consultation.

Further copies of this report can be obtained by contacting **Janice Parker** at the address below:

**Elections and Democracy Division
Ministry of Justice
5th Floor, 102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ**

**Telephone: 020 3334 3873
Email: janice.parker@justice.gsi.gov.uk**

This report is also available on the Ministry's website: www.justice.gov.uk.

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from janice.parker@justice.gsi.gov.uk or on telephone number 020 3334 3873.

Background

1. In the Green Paper *The Governance of Britain* (CM7170) published in July 2007 the Government made a commitment to consult on a number of significant proposals for constitutional change. The Government subsequently published the '**Election Day: Weekend Voting**' consultation paper. This sought views on whether elections should be moved from the traditional Thursday to the weekend and whether this would improve access and opportunities for voting. The consultation paper invited views on the merits of moving the voting day for Parliamentary and European elections, and local elections in England and Wales, and the best way of doing this.
2. The Government also sought views on whether "advance" voting at polling stations and the use of remote voting (for example, over the internet or telephone) may usefully support election days at the weekend or provide additional channels to be explored if the voting day was not moved.
3. The paper set out key questions and issues that would need to be taken into account if changes were made, specifically looking at:
 - pertinent issues, including religious concerns;
 - whether any such move would impact upon the security of elections;
 - the relationship between absent voting (e.g. postal voting) and election day;
 - to what extent other mechanisms for voting, for example "remote" voting through postal votes or over the internet/telephone, or voting in advance of polling, would be acceptable alternatives to those for whom weekend voting would present difficulties for religious or other reasons;
 - what people perceive as the benefits and drawbacks of remote e-voting;
 - whether changing the election day to the weekend, and/or the other measures aimed at increasing the convenience of voting, would incentivise non-voters to vote; and
 - whether any possible additional costs of weekend voting are outweighed by any potential benefits.
4. The Government wished to engage individuals and groups to seek views from as wide a range as possible. The consultation was aimed at electors and at those with a particular interest in the electoral process and the timing of elections, such as political parties, local authorities, electoral administrators, faith groups and representative organisations.
5. The consultation period closed on 26 September 2008 and this report summarises the views of those who responded.
6. A list of respondents (other than those that requested anonymity, or did not identify themselves in their responses) is at Annex A.

Summary of responses

7. A total of 941 responses to the consultation paper were received.
8. Of these, the majority (761) came from members of the public. These included 642 responses inspired by the Make Votes Count group (see paragraph below). Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and electoral administrators (along with representative bodies including the Association of Electoral Administrators [AEA] and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives [SOLACE]) provided 37 responses. We received representations from 86 Local Authorities and groups such as the National Association of Local Councils and the County Councils Network. Local councillors and other elected representatives provided 29 responses. Three faith groups and eight political groups responded to the consultation, as did 11 representative and civil society groups including the British Computer Society, the Open Rights Group, SCOPE in conjunction with the Pollen Shop and TATA Consultancy Services and Unlock Democracy. Responses were also received from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, the Committee for Standards in Public Life, the Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Defence and two suppliers of services and products to electoral administrators.
9. The 'Make Votes Count' organisation prompted some 642 responses from members of the public. In the main these responses concentrated on the open-ended final question in the consultation paper (Question 9): "Are you aware of any barriers which prevent individuals from voting? What are the issues and how can they be overcome?" The overwhelming majority of 'Make Votes Count'-inspired respondents answered this question by citing the use of the "first past the post" voting system in UK Parliamentary elections and local government elections in England and Wales as their primary barrier to voting. They usually made little or no reference to the other questions in the consultation paper. Nonetheless, where, in the course of their response to Question 9, respondents also indicated views on other questions and issues in the consultation paper, these views have been taken into account in the analysis of the relevant questions.
10. All of the responses were analysed to determine the level of overall support for moving election day and for the associated issues raised – "advance" voting and "remote" voting. We also looked at the level of support for these proposals among particular groups (such as members of the public, faith groups, local authorities, etc). Our analysis sought to identify the primary reasons for the views given and any evidence for the likely impact of the proposals.
11. Some responses from organisations included additional evidence gathered by polling their members for their views. Where possible, we have sought to highlight such evidence in this report.

12. Quotes have been used to demonstrate the majority view and any significant minority views. In the main, we have not attributed comments by name when made by members of the public and have sought to select quotes which are representative of a view.
13. Overall, a majority (53%) of those who provided views on the issue favoured retaining polling day on a weekday. Those with a role in running elections (i.e. electoral administrators and local authorities) were the clearest in their opposition to weekend voting, with approximately 80% of each group opposed. Faith groups and political groups were also opposed. The primary reason given was that there was little or no evidence that moving polling day would lead to increased turnout. Amongst those members of the public who responded on this issue, however, a small majority favoured a move to weekend voting, feeling that it would increase opportunities for voting for the majority of people.
14. A clear majority (72% of those respondents stating a view on the issue) supported the piloting of weekend voting ahead of any 'roll-out' across the country.
15. On the question of advance voting, 60% of respondents on this issue were opposed, with most expressing concerns over increased costs and logistical practicalities and the existence of an established alternative in the form of postal voting. The 31% of those supporting advance voting did so because they believed it would increase access and convenience for electors.
16. Most respondents (67%) on the question of remote voting supported postal voting, although a proportion voiced concerns about the perceived susceptibility of this method of voting to fraud. 62% of respondents either supported greater access to remote electronic voting, or at least further investigation of e-voting to determine whether issues of transparency, security and cost-effectiveness could be bottomed out.

Responses to specific questions

1. Do you think that polling day should be :

- a weekday,
- a Saturday,
- a Sunday, or
- take place over both Saturday and Sunday?

Please tell us why.

Of the 941 responses to the consultation, 313 provided a response to Question 1.

Of these, a majority (53%) favoured retaining polling day on a weekday, against 36% who advocated moving to weekend voting. The remaining 11% were undecided or their views were unclear from their responses. These results are broadly similar to polls carried out locally by some respondents to inform their response to the consultation. For example, one local authority reported the results of a Citizen's Panel discussion of the issue. They reported that 63% of those who took part favoured a Thursday poll, against 37% for the weekend. The British Youth Council conducted a poll on their website and reported that 303 out of the 363 who took part (84%) said that it would not be more convenient to vote at the weekend.

Amongst the different groups of respondents, support for weekend voting was greatest amongst members of the public, with 78 of the 138 (57%) who responded to Question 1 in favour. 30% preferred to retain a weekday poll and nearly 14% said they were undecided or felt the day of the poll did not matter.

The following extracts are typical of the responses received in support of weekend voting:

"Weekend Voting should definitely be used. Even a modest increase in voting will be worthwhile. Thursday voting is a problem both for voters and for election workers."

"...most people work Monday–Friday with a long commute and busy personal lives, so the option of voting on a Saturday would increase voter turnout."

"Fewer people work on a Sunday than any other day. Any church objections should be ignored. Countries such as France vote on Sunday without any objections so why shouldn't we?"

The split amongst elected representatives was closer, with nearly half supporting a change compared with 41% opposed and 10% undecided or uncertain.

None of the faith groups which responded to the consultation favoured weekend voting, and there was little support amongst the political groups. Those local authorities and electoral administrators (including the Association of Electoral Administrators) which responded overwhelmingly favoured retaining election day on a weekday (81% and 78%, respectively).

35 respondents (11% of those who provided a response to Question 1) had no clear preference, noting that there were advantages and disadvantages with all of the options, or suggested that the choice of polling day made little difference.

Where reasons were given for preferring a weekday poll they were varied, but included the view that there was insufficient evidence that moving the day of the election would have a significant positive impact on turnout. Indeed some respondents foresaw the opposite effect, suggesting that turnout could fall if weekend voting were introduced. The following extracts were typical of the responses reflecting this point of view:

“It could be argued that many people value their time at weekends more highly than on weekdays.”

“I predict that a switch to weekend voting will lead to a reduction in turnout. People live their lives at weekends and are just as busy as they might be on a Thursday. Furthermore, many will be away from home and are less likely to make a special effort to vote. On a Thursday it's easy, the polling station is near your home and it only takes a few minutes to pop in on the way to or from work.”

“While weekend voting has a number of perceived advantages, particularly for those with a busy lifestyle, it is unlikely to prove to be the panacea for falling voting turnout.”

Approximately a third of those in favour of retaining a weekday poll cited the additional administrative burden, attendant costs and greater logistical complexity which would result from moving election day to the weekend, particularly if polling was to take place over two days. Several respondents suggested that it would be more difficult to find appropriate polling and count venues at the weekend; while the availability of schools could improve, other typical polling venues (such as church halls, community centres and leisure facilities) were more likely to be busy with other activities at weekends.

In the main such concerns were more prevalent among those involved in running and funding elections – electoral administrators and local authorities. The Association of Electoral Administrators made the following comments:

“In general terms, it is possible that weekend voting may lead to an increase in turnout but we are certain that the additional financial costs would be considerable. We have approached this consultation on the basis that our role, as representing the interests of electoral administrators, is to highlight the administrative advantages and disadvantages of the

suggested change...[We] believe that the normal polling day should remain a weekday. Having said that, we have no strong view on the need to retain Thursday as an election day and there could be good reason to move it to earlier in the week.”

Other reasons given for not supporting weekend voting included the idea that for many the weekend was either seen as too busy a period for many electors or as a precious period for relaxation and leisure. A small number of respondents (15) made the point that electors were familiar with the traditional Thursday poll and that any change could lead to confusion.

A little over one third of all respondents (35%) were of the view that moving polling day would be worthwhile. Nearly half of these suggested that hectic and mobile modern lifestyles make voting on a Thursday difficult, or at least unattractive. For these people, weekend voting would maximise the time available and therefore the convenience of voting. However, only 16 respondents believed that it would lead to higher turnout.

Of those who supported weekend voting, nearly half (44%) preferred the option of running the poll over both a Saturday and a Sunday, while 17% favoured a Saturday poll and 18% Sunday. The remaining 21% did not indicate a preference.

A small number of respondents suggested alternatives to the options provided in the consultation. For example, Emily Thornberry MP advocated making Election Day a new Bank Holiday:

“I support the principle of moving voting to a Saturday, though I would also like the Government to look at holding elections on a new mid-week Public Holiday. If elections were held on a Wednesday, with Election Day designated a public holiday, I believe this could help people to vote even more than weekend voting”

Others suggested some combination of a weekday and a weekend day (e.g. Friday & Saturday or Sunday & Monday).

The Electoral Commission stated that it was not opposed to weekend voting in principle, but that no change should be considered without clear evidence that it would be of significant benefit to the voter. This view was shared by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

“The Committee is not opposed in principle to moving the day of elections from Thursday to the weekend. But we have seen no evidence that such a move would bring any clear benefits... It is not obvious that...[people] ...would find it easier to vote at the weekend.”

The responses to this question – the key question in the paper, essentially – displayed a number of conflicting views on the benefits and drawbacks of moving the election day and revealed a complex picture of issues that affected different people and groups.

2. Who would be affected by changing the voting day to a weekend and how?

There were 249 responses to Question 2 covering a range of views. Many noted that electors would be affected by changing polling day, but opinions varied between those who thought the impact would be negative (e.g. for weekend workers and those in rural areas who are dependent on public transport) and those who believed it would be positive. Opinion was also divided on the issue of whether it might be easier for weekday commuters to vote at the weekend or on a weekday when travelling to or from work. The following extracts are typical of responses to this question:

“... weekend voting is easier for working people and people with families...Early morning voting does not suit many people, often in a rush to get to work, then after a day’s work people are not inclined to venture out again to vote. Weekends are normally more leisurely, time management more flexible.”

“More electors might be nearer their designated polling places at the weekend, but they may also have weekend (family) commitments that would have just as great an inhibitory effect on participation as any workday commitment.”

Others felt that whilst some people would be adversely affected by moving to weekend voting, the change would be worthwhile:

“Whilst any change would result in winners and losers, a move to voting on Saturday and Sunday would almost certainly result in more winners than losers.”

A third of respondents noted the negative impact that moving Election Day might have on those with religious beliefs, and highlighted that this would apply not only to electors, but also to candidates, political party workers and electoral administrators. Responses to this question included these extracts:

“Friday will rule out Muslims, and Saturday will exclude Jews. Sunday voting is offensive to Christians”

“If voting takes place solely on a Sunday or includes a Sunday, three categories of people will be particularly affected: (a) Individuals who have a conscientious objection to voting on a Sunday, (b) Individuals who have a conscientious objection to working on a Sunday, (c) Voters living in districts where the polling venue would normally be church premises.”

Similar points were raised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities and, in subsequent communications, with the Church of England and the Salvation Army.

Half the respondents noted the effect on polling station and count staff, as well as the police, with many raising issues around whether sufficient staff could be recruited at the weekend.

The singular difficulty identified by the returning officers is the ability to recruit knowledgeable and willing staff to undertake polling and count duties. Costs of both would also inevitably increase and be an additional resource burden for Local Authorities and Parish Councils in administering local elections.

The Electoral Commission noted that weekend voting would raise a number of potential issues in relation to resources, availability of venues, security, exit polls and the timing of elections.

Representative group SCOPE, which responded in conjunction with the Pollen Shop consultancy and TATA Consultancy Services, observed that while many people may benefit from weekend voting, for others it will create barriers to their participation in democracy. They cautioned that it should not be assumed that everyone has more time with which to vote over a weekend and suggested that anyone with caring or medical commitments or who is supported by carers or family members, lives in supported accommodation or uses care services might be affected.

3. Do you think that greater access to advance voting in polling stations should be made available alongside weekend voting? Please explain why.

While the question referred to advance voting in conjunction with weekend voting, the majority of respondents chose to address the issue on its own merits.

Of the 941 responses to the consultation, 240 provided views on this question. Overall, 74 of the 240 respondents (31%) favoured greater access to advance voting, although a quarter of these were not strongly in favour and argued that it should only take place in a limited number of centralised polling venues and/or if proved to have a significant impact on turnout. Approximately 60% overall (143) were opposed. A significant proportion (10%) of respondents appear to have related the question to other issues, for example, remote electronic voting.

Support for advance voting was not strong amongst any of the main categories of respondents. Members of the public split 54% to 28% against advance voting (with 18% unclear) and there was a similar split amongst elected representatives (58% to 26%). Opposition to advance voting was strongest amongst responses from local authorities and electoral administrators (65% to 32% and 70% to 30%, respectively).

Of those favouring greater access to advance voting in polling stations, nearly half commented that this would provide improved accessibility and increased voter convenience. The following quotes are typical of this view:

“Yes. Any measures to increase voter turnout should be considered... Although there is little evidence weekend voting increases turnout, enabling votes to be cast over a long period should help to increase turnout.”

“Yes, accepting the additional cost, voting should be made as easy and convenient as possible in order to accommodate increasingly busy and hectic lives. In other words, increased flexibility.”

“...we are always broadly supportive of ways in which voting can be made more accessible, as long as the integrity of the ballot is not threatened. We also believe where possible that people should be able to vote in person. We therefore support the idea of greater access to advance voting, especially when you factor in some people’s distrust of postal votes.”

There was some support for making advance voting available at a few centrally located polling stations rather than at all locations. Doing so would reduce the number of additional polling station staff required, and the number of premises. One Electoral Services Officer said:

“Convenience and choice should be provided to electors but the success of such schemes must be weighed against the cost. Advance voting could be made available at a limited number of polling stations rather than at all locations to reduce overall costs.”

Some respondents suggested making advance voting available in non-traditional but well-attended places such as train stations (for commuters), town centres, supermarkets, libraries and shopping centres. The Electoral Reform Society commented:

“We support the suggestion of greater access to advance voting in polling stations, whether or not Election Day is shifted to the weekend. We note that exploring options for advance voting was one of the recommendations of the Gould report¹. Voting in person at a polling station is the most secure and certain method of voting, and people who want to vote in this way but are unable or unwilling to vote at the weekend, should be allowed to do so. A single, secure polling station open during working hours for the week preceding the election, at a local authority building in the main town in the constituency, is the minimum requirement. Local authorities may also wish to make use of other techniques permitting advance voting in person, such as having a mobile polling station circulating in rural areas (and low turnout areas of towns and cities too). They may also wish to make it easier for particular groups, such as commuters, by varying the physical provision of polling places. We support advance voting and favour it being widely available”.

Those opposed to advance voting cited a number of different reasons, with 40% – including many local authorities and electoral administrators – noting that it would be likely to cause resource issues. One such respondent commented:

“No – the biggest reason for saying no is resources; local authorities do not always have the resources available to them to take on extra services,

¹ The Electoral Commission asked Ron Gould CM to produce an Independent Review of the Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections 3 May 2007. His report was published on 23 October 2007.

including staff availability, hire of premises and security of paperwork each day. Then there is a need to provide a new ballot box each day the polling station is open, so that it can be sealed in the presence of those attending.”

Nearly a third of those not in favour of advance voting in polling stations noted that it was already possible for those unable or unwilling to attend a polling station on election day to opt to vote by post. Given the availability of this existing form of advance voting, such respondents questioned the need to add advance voting in polling stations to the mix.

“Postal votes provide an established and practical means of enabling electors to cast their vote in advance of polling day...”

“No. People have the option of using a postal vote if unable to get to the polls. The recent extensions to voting time for local elections seem to have had no significant impact on turnout.”

The Association of Electoral Administrators noted:

“Although the concept of multi-channel voting might appear desirable, adding “advance voting” to the two current voting channels (polling stations and postal voting) increases the costs and the complexity of the overall process. Returning Officers would need to ensure they are able to properly manage these projects and the associated risks which include adding to the security and integrity issues relating to the conduct of the election.”

Advance voting has been piloted in local elections in a number of English local authorities in the past (in 2000, 2002, 2006 and 2007). A significant number of respondents cited the evidence from these earlier pilots, noting that, while those opting to vote early had welcomed the convenience, the effect on turnout had been minimal. Surveys conducted during the pilots suggest that many of those who chose to vote early would have voted on the normal Thursday election day in any event had the option to vote early not been available to them.

“The evidence from the pilots shows that advance voting was primarily used by those who would have voted anyway and that the effect on turnout was limited. However, there is also evidence that the public liked the additional convenience offered by advance voting,”

Other reasons provided for not supporting advance voting included the issue of the security and transparency of the ballot. Questions of integrity were also raised by a number of those generally in favour of advance voting, as in the following extract:

“The first and paramount issue in any poll is that is seen to be fair and without interference. Anything which removes this transparency is to be avoided and that includes ‘locking the polls away overnight’. Whether or not there is interference, there is the perception that there might be and that weakens the legitimacy of the result.”

A small but varied number of respondents felt that access to polling stations was already sufficient given their long opening hours (7am to 10pm for all statutory elections in the UK) and that adopting advance voting would simply add to the complexity of running elections for little perceived benefit. One such respondent stated:

“We do not believe that providing polling stations before Election Day is necessary. The extended polling hours and absent voting methods provided by the 2006 [Electoral Administration] Act give electors ample chance to vote.”

A further reason, cited by several members of the public opposed to advance voting, was that it allows people to vote before the end of the election campaign in which candidates and political parties put forward their views and policy platforms. It was suggested that this could put advance voters at a disadvantage if they had already voted when an important point is revealed late in the election campaign that might have affected their decision to vote for a particular party or candidate, as cited in the following extract:

“The rhythm of our elections has developed over time and the voting experience is compromised if one has already voted when an important point is revealed late in the election. I speak having used postal voting and it is not fully satisfying.”

- 4. Do you think that greater access to remote voting (whether through traditional postal voting or by electronic means) should be made available alongside weekend voting? Should such arrangements be explored even if polling day were not moved to the weekend? Please explain why.**
- 5. What do you perceive to be the benefits and the drawbacks of remote e-voting?**

We received 271 responses to Question 4 and 254 to Question 5. Most respondents chose to address the issue of remote voting on its own merits, rather than in conjunction with weekend voting.

Most respondents provided some specific comments on either postal voting or remote electronic voting, or on both. Some favoured one method of remote voting but were strongly opposed to other methods. Given this, we summarise the responses on postal voting and electronic voting separately below. However, 71 respondents simply gave their views on remote voting in general. Of these, 39 were opposed to greater access being made available, 23 were in favour and 9 were undecided. The primary reasons given for opposing greater access were either that current arrangements for voting were sufficient or that remote voting is regarded as increasing the risk of fraud.

In all, 116 respondents offered comments on postal voting. Two-thirds of these were generally supportive on the basis of the convenience it offers to electors. However, a number made the point that they wanted to see much

tighter measures to combat fraud to ensure the integrity of this method of voting. A significant number made the point that as postal voting has been open to all on demand since 2000², they could not see how there could be greater access to postal voting than at present. Most of those who opposed greater access to postal voting cited concerns about the perceived susceptibility of this method of voting to fraud.

A total of 184 respondents provided specific views on remote electronic voting, or e-voting. Of these, the majority were supportive, with 44% clearly in favour and a further 22% more cautious but supportive – two-thirds in total. The latter group had concerns about the security of electronic voting methods, but favoured further investigation to determine whether electronic voting could be made secure. The comments below are typical of this view:

“Remote voting is new and uncharted territory which would need to undergo rigorous testing for security purposes before it could be utilised in elections. However, once it has been proved to be a secure way to vote, it should be encouraged as it compliments modern, electronic lifestyles and could potentially increase voter turnout amongst the younger demographic in particular.”

“Electronic voting is supported in the long term as it is seen as an important additional convenient channel. However we have major concerns regarding security of on-line voting, IT capacity issues nationally, and the substantial additional costs.”

“... it must be recognised that voting arrangements should reflect modern lifestyles, particularly if electors are disadvantaged because of the inadequacies of the methods available to them and particularly as technology, and the use of technology increases. Consequently, although I echo the concerns of others re a cost effective, secure and across the board implementation of compatible systems that the public can have absolute trust in, I cannot see how these systems/ ideas can be discounted in the long term.”

Of the 68 members of the public who provided views on this issue, 31 were supportive, with a further 11 more cautiously so – 62% overall, against 26 (38%) who were opposed. Amongst the 52 local authorities that provided views, the split was 69% in favour to 31% against, and amongst electoral administrators and their representative bodies the split was 76% to 24%.

Convenience and greater accessibility for the voter were the primary benefits of remote e-voting cited by respondents. It was suggested that increasing the number and types of channels available for voting would increase voter turnout. The following extract supported this view:

“The use of a diverse range of channels to improve electoral turn out has to be considered in the context of the changing nature of communications

² Except in Northern Ireland.

in society. Remote e-voting offers increased convenience to the voter. It has the potential to increase turnout. It links into the lifestyle of those who use electronic forms of communication in their daily lives.”

To some, remote electronic voting offers the potential to increase access for groups and individuals who have traditionally been excluded, including those with certain disabilities as well as overseas voters and military personnel on overseas deployment.

“MoD [Ministry of Defence] feels very strongly that access to remote voting will end the disadvantage that our personnel and families working overseas currently have of not being able to return postal votes in time to be counted. Electronic voting would remove this barrier to our disenfranchised personnel and families.”

Comments received suggest that electronic voting could appeal particularly to young people. The British Youth Council provided evidence from a mini poll which it ran on its website: *“Do you think that more young people would vote in elections if they were able to vote online, by email or by post?”*. 83% of those polled, or 120 of 144, agreed that it would. Only 10 (7%) of respondents voted 'No' and 14 people said they were undecided. According to the support shown by their online poll the British Youth Council believes that increasing access to remote voting should be further explored. Another respondent suggested:

“Voting by Internet is to be encouraged – this is “where” an increasing proportion of people are spending an increasing proportion of their time – particularly and precisely the demographic groups that are notoriously poor in taking part in elections. If you can't bring the people to the election, take the election to the people!”

One electoral software service supplier noted that the efficiency of elections could be enhanced by electronic voting, with the potential for faster and more accurate counts of electronic ballots.

The Electoral Commission believes that a number of significant issues relating to security, transparency and cost effectiveness need to be addressed before consideration is given to introducing e-voting for statutory elections. They maintained that consideration of e-voting should only take place within the context of a wider electoral modernisation strategy:

“The Commission’s experience of evaluating a significant number of e-voting pilot schemes over several years has led us to conclude that e-voting should not be implemented or further piloted until an effective framework of qualified suppliers is in place to support and exploit them, and until a range of issues identified in our pilot reports have been addressed. This would include the introduction of individual electoral registration and an electoral modernisation strategy...”

Of the 63 respondents explicitly opposed to greater access to remote electronic voting, most gave the reason of fraud/security, in particular how to ensure confidentiality, as with the following extract:

“Electronic voting should be avoided at all costs. Electronic voting is open to greater potential fraud and a negative impact upon public confidence in electoral propriety.”

A number voiced concerns over the ability of Government to provide an electronic voting system which was robust, and not susceptible to hackers, data loss or corruption. One respondent stated:

“There is little faith in the ability of Government (of any persuasion) to introduce large scale IT projects either on time or on budget or retain information in a secure manner.”

Concerns over public trust in the system and the transparency of an electronic poll were also common, with one respondent voicing doubt about the integrity of voting methods for which there is no paper trail and another questioning how electoral observers could verify the accuracy of an electronic poll. One respondent identifying himself as an IT professional commented:

“I would prefer voting to remain non-electronic – because such processes can be better understood and scrutinised by the population as a whole and are therefore more democratic and accountable...”

One member of the public suggested that e-voting is too impersonal and feared that it would weaken the link between representatives and electors. Similarly, a number of respondents were of the view that voting should be respected as a communal and community activity. The view was expressed that attending the polling station to cast a vote is a source of pride and a symbol of democracy.

Concerns over the likely cost of new electronic voting methods were common amongst electoral administrators and local authorities, with several believing that earlier pilots of e-voting in local elections in England had been expensive, with little impact on turnout. The complexity of running multi-channel elections was also flagged as a concern.

While those in favour of electronic voting often commented that it would be attractive to ‘hard-to-reach’ younger voters, several respondents highlighted their concerns about the so-called ‘digital divide’, suggesting that e-voting could be discriminatory against those in society with less access to IT.

6. Should the Government pilot weekend voting before introducing it across the UK?

A clear majority (72%) of the 249 responses to Question 6 felt that weekend voting, were it to be considered for introduction, should be piloted before it is implemented for elections across the country. A number of

respondents noted that the areas chosen for the pilots should be properly representative, should include both rural and metropolitan areas and that any pilots run should be rigorously evaluated to determine the impact of weekend voting on different groups and on the cost and complexity of running elections. The following comment from a Returning Officer was typical of those received:

“I feel very strongly that a move to weekend voting should be trialled over several years on a pilot basis before it is introduced nationally – firstly to ensure that it does actually increase turn out and secondly to help identify and iron out practical and technical problems.”

Most of the 63 (25%) respondents opposed to pilots were also opposed to the introduction of weekend voting. Others felt that there was no need to run pilots. The Electoral Reform Society felt that it would be inappropriate to pilot weekend voting because it would introduce confusion if polling were to take place on one day in one area and on a different day in an adjacent area:

“Perhaps of all the potential technical and administrative improvements, weekend voting is uniquely unsuitable for testing in small scale pilots. A national roll-out of weekend voting would be an entirely different matter from an isolated pilot in a local election. National and local election publicity would not be working in opposite directions and the novelty would arouse comment. If a trial run to permit an assessment of whether it has helped or not is required then it should take place all-out at one point of the cycle, with either the general election or an entire set of local elections occurring on the experimental weekend basis.”

A small number of respondents (8) stated no clear preference or were undecided on the merits of piloting.

7. What other issues may arise if the polling day is moved to the weekend? What are the issues for:

- **resources?**
- **polling station venues?**
- **security?**
- **administration of the election?**

We received 249 responses to this question. Electoral administrators and local authorities provided detailed comments on the potential impact on aspects of their work of moving to weekend voting. The overriding theme of these responses was that a move to weekend voting, particularly if polling took place over both Saturday and Sunday with the count taking place on Sunday night, would lead to an inevitable increase in the demand for resources and logistical complexity of running elections.

Resources

The AEA suggested that direct staff costs (for polling station and count centre staff) would almost certainly need to be higher to encourage recruitment of appropriate people for weekend working. Currently, around 50% of the staff employed in polling stations on election day are local authority employees who are often given time off with pay from their normal roles to assist on election day. Other local authority staff also assist with various tasks on polling day (including inspection of polling stations, opening postal votes and dealing with general enquiries through reception offices and telephone switchboards). Special arrangements would need to be considered to cover staffing levels and access to council premises.

One Elections Officer for a rural district council surveyed council staff who had previously worked on elections to determine whether they would be willing and able to work at weekends, and at what cost. The evidence from this survey – to which 43 people responded – suggests some areas at least could find it difficult to recruit sufficient staff to run elections at the weekend.

Of the 23 Presiding Officers (those who run individual polling stations on election day) who responded to the survey, 15 indicated that they would be prepared to work on a Saturday, while 8 would not. 10 would work on a Sunday, while 13 would not. If the election were to take place over both Saturday and Sunday, 9 would be willing to work, but 14 would not. Similar results were received from Poll Clerks, Count Assistants and those opening postal votes. Based on reports of the remuneration which would be expected were they to work at weekends, the Elections Officer (mentioned earlier) estimated the cost of running elections would increase by at least 100% for one weekend day, or 200% for two days.

Polling station venues

Most respondents noted that many traditional polling station venues such as church halls and community centres would either be unavailable at weekends, or more costly to hire. Sports and leisure facilities, which are often used as count centres, would be similarly affected. Given this, the AEA believed that:

“Such a major change will warrant a complete review of all polling districts and polling places so that appropriate stations may be identified for use by the Returning Officer. This will require a reasonable lead time and sufficient funding.”

Many respondents noted that weekend voting would have the advantage of not requiring schools to be closed for use as polling stations, saving disruption to schoolchildren and their parents. However, the AEA observed that the costs of using schools at weekends would be higher as Returning Officers currently pay only heating, lighting and cleaning costs for specific room(s); additional charges would arise if school staff were required to open the premises on a non-school day.

Security

The Electoral Commission noted that running a poll over more than one day (either because polling occurs over both Saturday and Sunday or because advance voting is used) would mean ballot boxes would need to be sealed and stored securely overnight. If stored in a central location they would then need to be redistributed to polling stations the following morning. This would add to the resource demands of running the election, and could lead candidates and agents to raise security concerns.

Police forces would also be affected. The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland [ACPOS] stated that weekend voting would place increased pressure on the police:

“The additional burden on the police service in Scotland would be significant. With every force having regular football and other sporting and special events commitments, alongside the peak daytime and nighttime economy activity, the capacity to deal with elections would be seriously depleted. It would be likely that rest days or annual leave for certain officers would require to be cancelled just to meet the minimum deployment for elections.”

Administration of the election

Electoral administrators cautioned that weekend voting, particularly if the poll were held over two days, would create additional problems. For example, electoral administrators would need access to their office and IT systems (including IT support) over the weekend, when usual weekday local authority facilities and services would not tend to be available. As the AEA noted:

“Difficulties associated with finding sufficient appropriate polling and counting venues and recruiting sufficient appropriate staff and dealing with the complexities and possible logistical problems that could arise from the storage and reissuing of ballot boxes, etc. will impact on the ability to administer the election efficiently and effectively.”

The Electoral Commission suggested that postal voting could be more difficult to administer if elections were held at the weekend. Under current arrangements, in elections where a Royal Mail ‘sweep’ of sorting offices is used, most postal ballots posted up to the last post on polling day itself will be collected and counted. With weekend voting, the Commission suggested, the last post collection and any sweep would take place earlier. This may lead to postal votes, posted late, not being received by the Returning Officer in time to be counted. Postal collections and deliveries at weekends vary from those on a weekday and that could have a significant impact if particular measures were not put in place at election time.

- 8. If weekend voting is introduced for local government elections, do you agree that the normal time for holding these elections should be moved from the first Thursday in May to the second weekend in May? If not, please explain which weekend you believe it would be most appropriate for these elections to be held and why.**

A clear majority (70%) of the 222 responses to this question agreed with the proposal that were weekend voting to be introduced for local government elections they should be moved to the second weekend in May, from the traditional first Thursday.

Forty-three (19%) respondents were opposed; approximately half on the grounds that they did not support weekend voting. ACPOS commented:

“The Scottish Police Forces do not believe that the second weekend in May would be appropriate or easily managed. The football season would be coming to a climax and traditional May events, marches and parades take place during the weekends this month. Although as a service we are not in favour of weekend voting, were it to be introduced in Scotland, the last weekend in May or first weekend in June would be preferable, the football season having concluded and annual leave periods for officers not at a peak. That said, the capacity to deal with weekend elections would still be a challenge that would involve significant extra financial support.”

A number of respondents suggested moving polling day away from May entirely; holding the poll in June would avoid the ‘congestion’ in May caused by the sporting and other events mentioned by ACPOS, and the two bank holidays in England and Wales in May, with one in Scotland. One electoral software supplier suggested that holding the elections in June as a matter of course would make sense given that they are in any case moved to June once every five years to coincide with the elections to the European Parliament.

Two members of the public suggested holding local government elections in early March. Doing so, they argued, would allow newly elected councils to set the budget for the forthcoming financial year.

Ten percent of respondents felt that the date of the election was unimportant.

- 9. Are you aware of any barriers which prevent individuals from voting? What are the issues and how can they be overcome?**

A total of 887 responses were received to Question 9, including 641 prompted by the Make Votes Count organisation which promotes voting system reform. Make Votes Count encouraged visitors to their website to respond to this part of the consultation and made some suggestions as to the possible barriers to voting.

Responses varied, but included discussion of both actual physical barriers to voting and perceived barriers. On the latter, 663 (75%) respondents, mostly members of the public via Make Votes Count, cited the voting system as the principal barrier to voting. They advocated the introduction of a system of proportional representation [PR] to replace the first-past-the-post system.

“Very few people are prevented from voting. Huge numbers are discouraged from voting by the disenfranchisement which is intrinsic to the first-past-the-post system. This can be overcome by replacing first-past-the-post with a system in which each vote has equal weight.”

Some favouring PR suggested that the first-past-the-post voting system promoted a type of politics where there were only minimal perceived differences between the stated positions of the mainstream political parties, and where candidates and parties only made genuine efforts to campaign in marginal seats. Voter apathy and/or a lack of engagement, awareness and interest in the political process were cited as a barrier to voting by nearly 100 respondents. Some called on candidates and political parties to do more to engage and communicate with electors.

The Democratic Society made the following comments:

“Many of the barriers to voting are psychological – such as a feeling that a vote will not matter, or that politicians are not to be trusted, or that they do not agree with the positions of any political party. The Democratic Society is concerned with all of these issues, but also supports ideas...[such as weekend voting]...that make it easier for those wavering on whether to vote or not to exercise their choice.”

Relatively few respondents highlighted concerns about physical barriers to voting, although issues such as the location of polling stations, access for those with disabilities, dependence on public transport and the potential difficulties faced by voters for whom English is not their first language were all raised.

Conclusions and next steps

The Government launched the Election Day consultation with an open mind on weekend voting and whether moving polling day could be expected to support greater participation. We are grateful to the many people and organisations that took the time and trouble to respond to the consultation and have considered carefully the views expressed. The high number of responses to the consultation suggests a widespread interest in the issues.

It is clear that there is no simple or single solution to raising participation and addressing the issues of low or falling turnout, and the responses reveal that there is a wide range of views on the proposals that have been put forward in this consultation.

While an overall majority of respondents favoured retaining Election Day on a weekday, among those members of the public who responded a small majority supported proposals for weekend voting. The Government is also aware of the findings of a recent survey. In its report on the European and local elections held on 4 June 2009,³ the Electoral Commission cites the findings of a post-election survey conducted on its behalf by Ipsos MORI. Non-voters were asked if the opportunity to vote at the weekend would have made them more or less likely to vote. Thirty-six per cent said they would be more likely to vote if they had the chance to do so at the weekend. Two per cent said that it would make them less likely to vote. That may be useful, if not conclusive, information. The Government recognises that the interests of electors must be a central factor in deciding and developing the systems that support the electoral system.

The Government must also carefully balance the potential benefits of any proposal along with input from others with an interest, the practicalities of any change and with its likely cost. Evidence provided by local authorities and electoral administrators suggests that a weekend poll, particularly one held over two days, would add considerably to the logistical complexity of running elections, particularly in terms of finding appropriate staff and premises. Such resourcing issues were also raised by ACPOS, which suggested weekend voting would place a significant additional burden on the police service.

Taking this all into account the Government believes that the potential benefits are outweighed by the lack of consensus overall, even amongst electors. However, in recognition that there is some evidence of support amongst electors – although not conclusive here – if further evidence or a stronger view in favour of weekend voting were to become apparent in the future, we believe that this issue should be considered further.

³ The European Parliamentary and local government elections June 2009: Report on the administration of the 4 June elections.
<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/publications-and-research/election-reports>

For now, however, given the many varied and complex views and issues surfaced by the responses to this consultation and in the absence of clear evidence that its introduction would have a significant positive impact on participation rates that would justify the increased resource needs **the Government does not propose to move forward with weekend voting at this time.**

Whilst the consultation paper raised questions in relation to advance voting and remote voting in relation to providing support for weekend voting, the majority of respondents on these issues dealt with them as stand-alone concepts, not tied to the voting day issue. The responses on advance voting reflect limited support from both electors and administrators. Many felt that it would not improve turnout and that resourcing was a prohibitive factor given that the facility for postal voting already exists. There were nevertheless some strongly argued benefits in terms of improved accessibility and increased voter convenience. Concerns about the cost and resource implications could be mitigated by limiting the number and nature of any advance polling stations and this is something that may need to be considered further in the future.

The responses on remote voting reflected a continuing support for postal voting and a cautious but supportive view of further investigation into e-voting. Fears of fraud were evident in responses to these areas and that is something that the Government takes very seriously – both in relation to existing postal voting provisions and if there is to be further examination of the viability of e-voting.

The results from the consultation suggest there is continued popular support for remote voting – whether by postal means as now, or potential electronic means in the future. But it is clear from the responses that people wish to be reassured that such methods are secure, transparent and cost-effective. This is an area that needs to be kept under review.

The Government is committed to approaching change to the electoral system in a balanced way to support accessibility and increased engagement but also to ensure that the security and integrity of the ballot is protected. Maintaining public confidence in the electoral system is paramount and it is right that any proposal for change is taken forward only where there is broad support. **The Government is currently considering various issues in relation to the future of the electoral process, and the information and views gathered through this consultation will feed into that consideration.**

Consultation Co-ordinator contact details

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation **process** rather than about the topic covered by this paper, you should contact Julia Bradford, Ministry of Justice Consultation Co-ordinator, on 020 3334 4492), or email her at consultation@justice.gsi.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you may wish to write to the address below:

Julia Bradford
Consultation Co-ordinator
Ministry of Justice
6th Floor
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

If your complaints or comments refer to the topic covered by this paper rather than the consultation process, please direct them to the contact given on page 3.

The consultation criteria

The seven consultation criteria are as follows:

1. **When to consult** – Formal consultations should take place at a stage where there is scope to influence the policy outcome.
2. **Duration of consultation exercises** – Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.
3. **Clarity of scope and impact** – Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.
4. **Accessibility of consultation exercises** – Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.
5. **The burden of consultation** – Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.
6. **Responsiveness of consultation exercises** – Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.
7. **Capacity to consult** – Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

These criteria must be reproduced within all consultation documents.

Annex A – List of respondents

Members of Parliament

Emily Thornberry MP, Islington South and Finsbury

Welsh Assembly Government

Dr Brian Gibbons AM, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Government Departments

Ministry of Defence

Faith Groups

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Affinity

Board of Deputies of British Jews

Local Councillors

Cllr Alan Walker, Liverpool City Council

Cllr Amanda Brading, Parish Council of Winscombe and Sandford

Cllr Brian O’Flynn, Scarborough Borough Council

Cllr Christine Heath, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Cllr Christopher Meredith, Fretherne with Saul Parish Council

Cllr Dr P R Sterland, Long Ashton Parish Council

Cllr Gill Butler, Hart District Council

Cllr Jim Allen, Cabinet Member of North Tyneside Council

Cllr Jim Winship, Chair of Alvington Parish Council

Cllr John Gili-Ross, Essex Association of Local Councils and Colchester Association of Local Councils

Cllr John Westlake, Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council

Cllr Karen Cherrett, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Cllr Leanne Hornby, Shorne Parish Council

Cllr Liz Simpson, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats in Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Liberal Democrat PPC

Cllr Margaret Marshall, North Tyneside Council

Cllr Meilyr B Hughes, Llanelli Rural Council

Cllr Mrs M Ann Haigh, Bibury Parish Council
Cllr Paul Smith, Islington Council
Cllr Peter Relsdorf, Wirral Borough Council
Cllr Peter Tysack, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr R L Taylor, UBC Member, Calderdale Council
Cllr Richard Mark Clayton, Manchester City Council
Cllr Robert James Vickery, Churchill Parish Council
Cllr Stephen W Murray, Loughton Town Council
Cllr Tony Vickers, Newbury Town Council
Cllr Vivian Achwal, Winchester City Council
Cllr Wayne Naylor, Leicester City Council

Political parties

Aldershot Constituency Liberal Democrats
Dunkirk and Lenton Labour Party
Liberal Democrat Group, Leicestershire County Council
North Tyneside Conservative Group
Oxton Liberal Democrats
The Conservative Party
Wakefield Constituency Labour Party
Wirral West Liberal Democrat Party

Local Authorities

Abess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding Parish Council
Aberdeen City Council
Amber Valley Borough Council
Aylesbury Vale District Council
Birmingham City Council
Borough Council of Wellingborough
Bradley Stoke Town Council
Braunstone Town Council
Cambridge City Council
Caradon District Council
Chichester District Council
Chiltern District Council

Chorley Borough Council
Clevedon Town Council
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council)
Council of the Isles of Scilly
County Councils Network
Coventry City Council
Crowle Parish Council
Daglingworth Parish Council
Dartford Borough Council
Derby City Council
Derbyshire Association of Local Councils
Elmbridge Borough Council
Epping Forest District Council
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Fareham Borough Council
Fenland District Council
Frampton on Severn Parish Council
Gravesham Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Harpenden Town Council
Hastings Borough Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils
Kilburn Parish Council
Kincorth/Leggart Community Council
Kingston Seymour Parish Council
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Leicestershire County Council
Liverpool City Council
Liverpool City Council
Miserden Parish Council
Monyash Parish Council
Nailsea Town Council
National Association of Local Councils

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
New Forest District Council
North East Derbyshire District Council
North Warwickshire Borough Council
North Yorkshire District Council Network
Northampton Borough Council
Purbeck District Council
Rossendale Borough Council
Rother District Council
Rushmoor Borough Council
Shropshire County Council
Somerset Association of Local Councils
South Ayrshire Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Holland District Council
South Ribble Borough Council
South Tyneside Council
Southampton City Council
Southborough Town Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stoke Gifford Council Parish Council
Swale Borough Council
Telford & Wrekin Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Wandsworth Borough Council
Welwyn Parish Council
West Dorset District Council
West Lancashire District Council
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Whaley Bridge Town Council
Wigan Council
Winchcombe Town Council
Woking Borough Council
Wycombe District Council

Electoral Administrators, Electoral Registration Officers & Clerks

Association of Electoral Administrators [AEA]

AEA Eastern Branch

AEA London Branch

AEA North West Branch

AEA Southern Branch

AEA Scotland and Northern Ireland Branch, SOLACE Scotland Branch, Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland [SOLAR], Scottish Assessors' Association [SAA]

Alan Batty, Returning Officer, Lewes District Council

Alison Wood, Electoral Services Manager, Wokingham Borough Council

Andrew Tiffin, Democratic Services Manager, Hart District Council

Christine Mason, Electoral Services Manager, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Colin Iveson, Returning Officer, Craven District Council

Daphne Snelson, Elections Officer, Eden District Council

Dave Woolley, Parish Clerk, Blagdon Parish Council

Denise Holwill, Electoral Services, Caradon District Council

Douglas Bain, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland

Frances Jones, Parish Clerk, Twineham Parish Council

Helen Parker, Head of Democratic Services, East Hampshire District Council

Jason Popham, Electoral Services Officer, Vale of White Horse District Council

Jayne Day, Electoral Services Team Leader, Havant Borough Council

Joan Human, Electoral Services Officer, East Cambridgeshire District Council

John Bennett, Deputy Greater London Returning Officer, Greater London Authority [GLA]

John Simmons, Senior Electoral Services Officer, Restormel Borough Council

Julie Baron, Electoral Services Manager, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Justine Davie, Elections Manager, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Lesley Hales, Principle Electoral Registration Officer, Wirral Council

Linda Clarkson, Principle Electoral Services Officer, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Liz Read, Democratic Services Manager, Blaby District Council

Marcia Beviere, Electoral Services Officer, Vale of White Horse District Council

Michael Summerville, Electoral Registration Officer & Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Nicki Barry, Parish Clerk, Tadley Town Council

Nigel Spilsbury, Electoral Services Manager, Plymouth City Council

Paul Morris, Electoral Registration & Returning Officer, Borough of Poole

Peter Allsop, Electoral Services, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Philip Seccombe, Electoral Services Officer, East Devon District Council

R MacBeath, Senior Depute Returning Officer, Aberdeen City Council

Rhys George, Electoral Services Manager, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Samantha L N Rigby, Electoral Services Assistant, St Helens Council

Sarah Porter, Parish Clerk, Beeley Parish Council

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives [SOLACE]

Yvonne Dawes, Democratic & Statutory Services Manager, Bristol City Council

Others

Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland [ACPOS]

British Youth Council

Campaign for Conservative Democracy

Committee on Standards in Public Life

Community Support

Electoral Reform Society

Open Rights Group

The British Computer Society

The Democratic Society

The Electoral Commission

The Institute of Engineering and Technology

The Pollen Shop, SCOPE and Tata Consultancy Services

Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers

Unlock Democracy

Suppliers

Northgate

OPT2VOTE

Members of the Public

Adrian Smith	Christopher Pankhurst	Gillian Fox
Alison Bielecka	Christopher David McKenna	Gordon Snow
Alison Jenner	Colin Bowdler	Graeme Smith
Andrew Clements	Colin Buchanon	Henrietta Bewley
Andrew Marchant	Colin Hunter	Ian Davison
Andrew Pratt	Cllr Dr Crispin Allard	Ian Ward
Andy Roberts	Danny Stone	Ibrar Hussain
Angela Hathaway	Darren Hopkinson	Itumelfng Osupeng
Ann Greaves	Dave Hawkey	James Austen Williams
Anthony Tuffin	David Braunholtz	James Downe
Antony N Winspear	David Charlton Taylor	Dr James Gilmour
B J Elton	David Holland	James Smith
Barry Edwards	David Milstead	Jean Patefield
Ben Appleby	Deirdre Wells	John Shaddock
Ben Howell	Derek Hawes Richards	Jon Harvey
Brenda Hobbs	Dorothy Holmes	Jonathan Tyler
Bruce Williamson	Edward Stacey	Josephine Malbon
Caroline Old	Eileen E Jousiffe	Karl White
Cathryn Symons	Elaine McClelland	Keith Best
Charles Wickstead	Fi Davies	Ken Johnson
Chris Begg	Frank Harasiwka	Ken Mitchell
Chris Lowe	Frank Skinner	L A Perry
Chris Stanbra	G S Collins	Laurence J Cox
Chris Walker	Geoffrey Wilson Clare	Liz Watford
Louis Stephen	Paul Edmond	Roger Harmer
Mark Burbidge	Pauline Clarke	Sally J Plummer
Martin Pike	Peter Buglass	Sandra Cottle
Matthew Hendrickson	Peter Da'Costa	Steve Coase
Michael Casey	Peter Davidson	Susan Ramm
Michael Hopkins	Peter F Brown	Susanna Rees
Michaela Goan	Peter Hooper	Suzanne Phillipps
Mike Willcox	Phelim MacCafferty	Tim Williamson

Moya Denman	Richard Allen	Tomas Thurogood-Hyde
Nicholas J Thorn	Richard Bearman	Tony Miller
Nigel Siederer	Rob Renold	William S Taylor
Pat Notton	Robert Curtis	Yann R Lovelock
Pat Sandle	Robert Taylor	

Three responses were received from persons or organisations that did not identify themselves.

641 responses from members of the public were not identifiable other than by their email address which it would not be appropriate to publish.