
Qualitative research report

Prepared for:

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A. BACKGROUND

The Electoral Commission requested that Cragg Ross Dawson conduct public opinion research on the design of ballot papers to be used at Scottish Parliament elections to feed into a public consultation being undertaken by the Scotland Office; this report summarises the key findings and issues raised by that research.

- the next elections for the Scottish Parliament will be held in 2007; these elections are combined with elections to Scotland’s 32 local authorities

- the additional member system (AMS) is used for the Scottish Parliament elections – electors can vote once for a constituency MSP and once for a political party or individual candidate on the regional list

- the 2007 Scottish local government elections will use the single transferable vote (STV) system for the first time; electors will number candidates in order of preference

- the Scotland Office is consulting on a new design of ballot paper for the Scottish Parliament elections, and requested that the Electoral Commission seek the views of voters on the design under consultation; Scottish Executive Ministers are separately reviewing the design of the Scottish local government ballot paper

- the design put forward by the Scotland Office features two columns, one containing the party representatives and individual candidates on the regional list and one containing the candidates for the relevant constituency

- there are a number of possible variations on this design, incorporating different features: colours, position of voting boxes and order of candidates; the Electoral Commission supplied a number of variations on this design for user testing
as part of the consultation process, research among voters and potential voters was commissioned to gauge response to the new design, to three other variants of this design, and to the two page ballot paper used in recent Scottish Parliament elections.
B. DESIGNS TESTED

- the following ballot paper designs were tested (a sample set of ballot papers is attached as an appendix to this report):

  - 1. separate ballot papers for constituency and regional vote – the design used in the 1999 and 2003 elections, using a traditional layout with candidate or party names alphabetically in a column, followed by party emblems and with voting boxes on the right of the page; the ballot paper colours used in 2003 were retained (aquamarine for the constituency ballot, peach for the regional list)

  - 2. combined ballot paper; the regional vote is on the left of the page (with a white background) and the constituency vote on the right of the page (with a peach background); party emblems are listed on the outside edge on each half of the ballot paper (on the left of the regional paper, and on the right on the constituency paper); this is followed as appropriate by party or candidate names, with the voting boxes for each contest next to each other in the centre of the page, separated by a dark line; the regional half of the ballot paper is ordered alphabetically by party with individual candidates following on at the end; constituency candidates are listed in order to correspond horizontally with the appropriate party on the regional list; those constituency candidates without a corresponding party on the regional list follow on alphabetically at the end of the constituency paper; the names of party list candidates are not included on the ballot paper
3. combined ballot paper utilising a more traditional layout; each side of the ballot paper is laid out as it would be if it stood on its own with party or candidate names followed by emblems followed by a column of voting boxes on the right; the two sides of the paper are separated by a dark line; the regional vote is on the left of the page (with a white background) and the constituency vote on the right of the page (with a peach background); the regional paper is ordered alphabetically by party name with individual candidates following on; the constituency paper is ranked so that constituency candidates correspond horizontally with the appropriate party on the party list; those constituency candidates without a corresponding party on the regional list follow on alphabetically at the end of the constituency paper.

4. combined ballot paper as per 2 (above), but with both the regional and constituency halves of the paper ranked alphabetically (therefore parties and individual candidates do not correspond horizontally).

5. combined ballot paper as per 2 (above), but with both the regional and constituency halves coloured peach.
C. **OUTCOME**

The following broad conclusions can be drawn from the research undertaken; detailed findings are presented in section D.

**Overall preference**

- the overall preference was for a single combined ballot paper rather than two separate papers

- though a single combined ballot paper is new to voters it does not appear to present any significant problems in principle and it is likely to suit those who prioritise ease and speed of voting

- on a comparative basis the preference is for design 3, as described above; 46 out of 100 people surveyed preferred this design, and none of the remainder were close in number of preferences

- preferences were consistent across demographic groups, regions and identification with different parties: there were no noticeable differences on these dimensions

**Ordering of parties and candidates**

- the positioning of the regional vote on the left of combined ballot papers with the constituency vote on the right was generally regarded as logical

- corresponding order of parties and candidates was regarded as clearer and less likely to cause mistakes in the way that votes were cast

- regarding the position of voting boxes on the combined papers (i.e. centrally or on the right of each half of combined ballot papers), most voters felt that they worked better on the right than in the centre
Instructions

- attitudes to instructions were mixed, and varied according to which ballot paper voters saw first, but on balance most thought they were useful

Use of colour

- across all ballot papers tested the general preference was for two different colours rather than one, to highlight the fact that the election involved two votes; this was particularly the case with the combined papers, where voters wanted to see a clear distinction between the two halves of the paper

- the use of one colour for both voting sections on the combined ballot paper was disliked. It was felt to be more sensible to have the two different votes distinguished clearly by using different background colours

- the black dividing line between the two halves of combined papers was not always noticed; when it was noticed or pointed out it was appreciated for reinforcing the distinction between the two votes

Suggestions

- if the preferred design is used, it would probably work slightly better with:
  - two distinct colours for the voting sections (rather than a colour and white)
  - if possible, a slightly larger font for the instructions

- given the apparent limited understanding of the election format, the more this can be communicated to voters through the ballot paper the better
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. The context

1.1 Attitudes to voting

- all respondents stated an intention to vote in future elections, but past voting behaviour varied

- some said they voted in all elections and regarded voting as a matter of principle and duty

  “Always. It is important. I think it’s down to my upbringing… my Dad.”
  Female, C2, 35-45, Dundee

- many others had good intentions before elections but less determination: they did not always vote because other obligations intruded, typically work or family issues

- the more frequent and regular voters placed more value on voting and the electoral process

  “Mostly I think that if you don’t vote you have no right to complain about what happens in the country.”
  Male, C2, 25-34, Glasgow

  “If you don’t vote you can’t complain, can you?”
  Female, BC1, 25-34, Dundee

- some put a specifically Scottish slant on the need to vote and the value of voting

  “I want to see us in Scotland run ourselves, being independent. That’s why it’s important.”
  Male, DE, 35-45, Dundee

- those who did not always vote tended to be less convinced of its value: they were uncertain how much effect their vote had

  “It makes little difference. Nothing changes in this town.”
  Male, C2, 25-34, Glasgow

- there was a perceived hierarchy of elections: most people felt it was more important to vote in UK Parliamentary elections than local elections
• awareness of the Scottish Parliament was universal, but understanding of its powers and activities varied

• knowledge tended to be higher among those over 35, BC1s and those who voted regularly

• attitudes to the Scottish Parliament also differed:
  - a minority were enthusiastic supporters: this was what many Scots had wanted for years, and felt it was responsible for important decisions
  - many were cautiously accepting: they felt on balance it was a good thing but saw the UK Parliament as making more difference to their lives
  - a few doubted its effectiveness and influence, or were disappointed by what it had achieved

• there were signs that the creation of the Scottish Parliament had begun to change the way some voters regarded politics and voting:
  - a small minority now felt it was more important to vote in Scottish Parliament elections than UK Parliamentary elections because the issues were closer to home, yet were significant and substantial
  - in this sense it had changed the perceived hierarchy of elections for these respondents
  - and it seemed to have renewed interest in politics and challenged some of the cynicism surrounding politics

1.2 Knowledge of the voting system

• awareness of the Scottish Parliament election format differed across the sample, but overall these voters seemed better informed than voters elsewhere

• there was a reasonably high level of awareness that there were two different votes involved in the Scottish Parliament elections
• knowledge of this was more evident among BC1s and the more regular and committed voters

• the better informed voters knew that the two votes were for the local constituency and the parties’ share of regional seats (which they often referred to as “the party vote” or “the list”)

“One is for the party, how many seats the party gets, and the one is for your local candidate.”

Male, BC1, 17-24, Glasgow

• many had a vague but incomplete understanding of the basis of the two votes:

  - they described the election as “voting for the local candidate and voting for someone for the area” or something similar

  - some thought that the constituency member dealt with local issues whereas the regional member was responsible for handling bigger regional issues

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT VOTES?

“Yes, my mum told me about that. I’m not sure why there are.”

Female, DE, 17-24, Glasgow

“That is for the whole party and that is for the individual you want to represent you in the local area.”

Female, C2, 35-45, Dundee

• generally, when asked, respondents thought that the reason for having two votes was to create a broader spread of parties and political representation; some described it as proportional representation

“So this one is a proportional representation kind of vote.”

Male, BC1, 35-45, Edinburgh

“I know it’s based on proportional representation.”

Female, BC1, 46-60, Edinburgh

• a substantial minority, largely C2DE and less frequent voters, had no idea why there were two votes, even after seeing the ballot papers
2. Response to the ballot papers – general issues

2.1 Initial impressions

- on first sight of the ballot papers most voters looked initially at the list of parties and candidates; on the basis of observation by the moderators, few seemed to start at the top and read the instructions

- a key aspect of this was the party names and logos: these attracted most attention, especially the logos, and were what voters looked for as they orientated themselves on the ballot paper

  "To be honest I just voted for the party I support and that was what I was looking for."
  Female, C2, 35-45, Glasgow

  "It was very clear. I was just looking for the [SNP] symbol."
  Female, C2, 35-45, Dundee

  "You know, I don't even think… I just go Labour, Labour and that's it."
  Female, C1, 25-34, Inverness

- the SNP logo stood out because it was bigger and bolder than the others; some respondents also wondered why the Scottish Conservative party logo differed from the UK Conservative party logo

  "I think the symbols stand out."
  Male, BC1, 25-34, Edinburgh

  "I think you very much look at the logo, so I was able to pick out SNP quite quickly but the Scottish Green Party I had to have a little look, but I think that is probably down to what you've been used to."
  Male, BC1, 35-45, Edinburgh

- the tendency to look first for party names and logos was reflected in the way most voters used the ballot papers: they gave little consideration to why there were two votes and cast their votes quickly
- all five ballot papers were seen as quite clear and straightforward in isolation: whichever was seen first was at least acceptable, and it was unusual for voters to reject the first ballot paper they saw

- at a quick glance it was common for respondents not to notice differences between the four combined papers; they often thought they were being given the same paper twice

- but when they were compared, some designs came across as clearer and easier to use than others

2.2 Accuracy and mistakes

- there was a high degree of accuracy in using the ballot papers: most were completed correctly and mistakes were unusual

- four voters put one cross on the paper; three put two crosses in the same column

- this sort of mistake suggested a lack of understanding of the election format (i.e. that there were two separate votes)

- it did not appear that any of the five papers were more likely to lead to these mistakes than any of the others

- the separate papers were less likely to give rise to these types of mistakes; because they were on separate sheets it was clearer to voters that each column required a cross

- occasional mistakes were made by those who saw the combined paper with alphabetical listing of parties and candidates after a paper with corresponding lists:
  - people voted as they wanted in the regional election but not in the constituency election
  - they assumed that the lists were corresponding on all the papers and did not bother to check
- this was almost certainly a function of the research situation: it happened when voters had become accustomed to corresponding lists.

2.3 Separate or combined papers

- the overall preference was for a single combined ballot paper rather than two separate papers.

- the option of separate papers was not often rejected, and when this was seen first few voters had any serious reservations about it.

- but when the alternative of a combined paper was introduced, this tended to be seen as simpler and easier to use, and as likely to be sufficiently clear if well designed.

- for most, the separate papers option was potentially a little cumbersome and fiddly in the polling booth compared with a single combined paper.

“I think they should just have it on a single one. It’s just more convenient, because you don’t have to shuffle papers about.”
Male, BC1, 17-24, Glasgow

“It could confuse people having two different sheets.”
Female, C1, 35-44, Inverness

- those who liked the idea of having separate papers believed it would reinforce the fact that there are two separate votes.

“For clarity it’s probably easier because of the fact that if you have two bits of paper and you know you have to vote on both it would get reduce mistakes I would have thought.”
Male, BC1, 35-45, Edinburgh

“You wouldn’t get confused at all with two bits of paper.”
Female, BC1, 16-24, Inverness

2.4 Corresponding or alphabetical lists

- respondents did not always notice the order in which the parties were listed.
• when the order was noticed, or it was pointed out by the moderator, the general feeling was that the corresponding layout worked better than both lists being presented in alphabetical order

• corresponding order was regarded as clearer and less likely to cause mistakes in the way that votes were cast

• as noted, the strong tendency was to vote for a party, whether or not there was a named individual to vote for, and to focus on party names when looking at the ballot papers

• it was easier to vote for the same party in the regional and constituency votes if the lists were corresponding: the boxes were on the same line on the ballot paper

“It’s just easier to have them on the same line. You look across from one column to the other, it makes it quicker to give your vote.”
Male, BC1 17-24, Glasgow

• as described above, some voters made mistakes when using the combined paper with separate alphabetical listing on each half: they voted for the party they wanted in the regional vote, but then put a cross in the corresponding box for the constituency vote

“I didn’t want to vote for them – that’s very confusing…Is it to deceive people?”
Male, 16-24, C2, Inverness

• those few who preferred the alphabetical layout thought that it was fairer: it meant that the major parties were spread out rather than being clustered at the top

“Alphabetical is probably a fairer way of doing it rather than having the biggest parties at the top and the smaller ones at the bottom.”
Male, BC1, 25-34, Glasgow

• some also thought that an alphabetical layout would encourage voters to consider their options more carefully; if the parties did not correspond on the two lists, more thought had to be given to the second vote
“If they are not directly across from each other then it gives you something to look for. Otherwise some people might vote incorrectly and not realise.”

Female, C2, 31-45, Glasgow

2.5 Position of the voting columns – combined papers

- views on where the voting boxes were placed on the combined papers (ie centrally or on the right of each half of the ballot paper) were not strongly expressed, but most voters felt that they worked better on the right than in the centre

- there were several reasons for this:
  
  - it seemed more logical because it corresponded with the natural way of reading from left to right
  
  - it made each voting section the same, and created a sense of order and structure
  
  - it encouraged voters to think carefully about their choice of party because the boxes were not next to each other

“Familiarity. If it’s got a tick box or some sort of box next to it, it’s the information and then your answer on the majority of forms and I think people would be used to doing that.”

Male, BC1, 25-34, Dundee

“That’s better because when you read you automatically read down this side first, so it’s a lot simpler, it’s a better design.”

Female, C2, 35-45 Dundee

“It’s clearer than the other one [with central columns] to have crosses after what you’re looking for”

Female, BC1, 16-24, Inverness

- a minority preferred the columns to be in the middle because they felt it would be easier to see which party they wanted to vote for

“Having the boxes side by side, that’s better. Less confusing. One is for the party and one is for the individual member.”

Male, BC1, 17-24, Glasgow

2.6 Order of votes – combined papers

- the positioning of the regional vote before the constituency vote on the combined papers was generally regarded as logical
• with reference to their behaviour when voting, many voters felt that the regional vote was more important because regional issues were bigger and carried more weight

• on this basis it made sense for the regional vote to come first, assuming they read left to right

• there was also a logic to it in that voters were primarily voting for the party, and the regional vote was for parties, not candidates (independents excepted)

2.7 Instructions

• attitudes to instructions were mixed, and varied according to which ballot paper voters saw first, but on balance most thought they were useful

• some voters who used the ballot papers by first seeking out the parties’ names and logos said that they had little need for instructions

• these people thought they knew how to vote and what they needed to do, and did not see instructions as adding to their knowledge

• others wanted instructions, to reassure them that they were completing the ballot papers as required

“You need instructions somewhere you really do.”
Female, BC1, 46-60, Edinburgh

“As long as it has the instructions on the top. If you are one of those people who rushes through things, which I am, and I often mess up forms, so I need instructions and I need things to be fairly simple and broken down for me.”
Male, BC1, 25-34, Edinburgh

• some who were given the separate ballot papers first felt that even if they knew what they were doing, the papers should include instructions

• the instructions in the four combined papers came across as helpful in explaining that there were two votes and in giving people background information on the reason for this
• and detailed elements of the instructions were useful:
  - the large line at the top: You have two votes
  - the arrow directing voters to the voting boxes
  - the instruction to Vote once only (X)

• less positively some of the less well informed, and perhaps less literate, voters felt that the instructions in the boxes looked too detailed and a little difficult to follow

  “I think it is slightly too wordy, what is in the boxes.”
  Male, BC1, 35-45, Edinburgh

  “I think some people need instructions, but it seems to be too much writing at the top. I think maybe shortened and highlighted it would work better.”
  Female, C2, 35-45, Dundee

• if this was their perception, these respondents often believed that the information did not tell them what they needed to know about how the election worked

  “The wording needs to be a bit clearer and easier understood.”
  Female, BC1, 16-24, Inverness

• when the combined and separate ballot papers were compared, there was some surprise at the absence of detailed information on the separate papers

• after seeing all the papers most respondents came to the view that the ballot papers should include instructions

2.8 Colour

• across all five papers the general preference was for two different colours rather than one, to highlight the fact that the election involved two votes

• this was particularly the case in the combined papers, where voters wanted to see a clear distinction between the two columns

  “I suppose it helps with the fact that you know it is two different things you are actually voting for, if nothing else it

makes you look. If you had problems with reading and you couldn’t read these parts you may think you’re only meant to vote once because it’s all one colour.”
Male, BC1, 35-45, Edinburgh

“All one colour is a bit more confusing. Looks like you’re not voting for two different things.”
Female, BC1, 16-24, Inverness

- it also applied to the separate papers: even though the votes were on separate papers in this route, the use of different colours helped reinforce the difference between them

- some believed that where the combined papers had one vote in colour and one in white, the vote in colour was the more important of the two

“I could see the fact that this panel was dark so it was almost like it was being given more importance. I don’t think one should be on just a white background and one should be coloured because that seemed to highlight one over the other.”
Male, C2, 25-34, Dundee

- this contrasted with the perception that the regional vote was more important and so was positioned on the left

- it might have been better if the combined papers had used two colours other than white, rather than a colour and white, to indicate that the two votes are of equal importance

- a minority thought that the white background colour was effective: they suggested that both the voting sections should have a white background

- choice of colour also prompted some debate

- the peach used on the combined papers was not widely liked but was accepted for being neutral

- it was rarely considered to be aesthetically pleasing; some saw it as typical of public service communications – dull and uninviting

- some voters felt it made the text harder to read than the white background
“When I looked at this one I couldn’t see the parties and it took me a little while longer to find the Scottish Labour Party. Black on white is definitely easier to read.”
Male, BC1, 25-34, Edinburgh

- the advantage of the peach colour was that it was not obviously linked to any political parties

- the peach and aquamarine used in the separate papers were seen by some as vibrant and eye catching, and as making it easy to read the text

“It doesn’t look so important when it’s in white.”
Female, BC1, 35-44, Inverness

- against this some voters thought it was unwise to use colours which might be seen as having associations with political parties (ie Labour and Conservative)

- a minority believed these colours were garish and lent an inappropriate sense of informality to the ballot papers

- the black dividing line between the two votes in the combined papers was not always noticed

- when it was noticed or pointed out it was appreciated for reinforcing the distinction between the two votes

“Although it says you’ve got two votes there’s a nice thick line down the middle, if you didn’t have that you could have a quick glance at it and it might look like a list and you’d only put one cross.”
Male, BC1, 25-34, Glasgow

“I think the colours are quite dead. The black line gives a very clear separation.”
Female, BC1, 46-60, Edinburgh

3. Response to the five designs

3.1 Overall

- all five ballot paper designs were considered broadly acceptable; though one was clearly preferred when they were compared, none were rejected outright
• considered preferences were as follows:
  - combined, peach and white, columns on right, corresponding lists: 46 out of 100 people surveyed
  - separate, peach and aquamarine, columns on right, alphabetical lists, no instruction boxes: 17 out of 100 people surveyed
  - combined, peach and white, columns in centre, corresponding lists: 14 out of 100 people surveyed
  - combined, both columns peach, columns in centre, corresponding lists: 13 out of 100 people surveyed
  - combined, peach and white, columns in centre, alphabetical lists: 10 out of 100 people surveyed

3.2 Combined, peach and white, columns on right, corresponding lists (design 3)

• this ballot paper was the preferred option of the five designs

• preferences for this design were spread across the sample, irrespective of age, social class, gender, region or party affiliation

• it contained virtually all the preferred elements of design and layout:
  - different colours for the two halves of the paper
  - corresponding lists of parties and constituency candidates
  - voting box columns on the right
  - logos positioned on each side of the paper

• overall it had a sense of logic and order to it
3.3 **Separate papers (design 1)**

- these papers were liked by a few respondents but had certain elements which prompted reservations
  
- in principle, many thought that it was a good idea to have the two different votes on separate pages to distinguish between them
  
- the use of different colours reinforced the distinction; and some liked the colours used, particularly the aquamarine
  
- the position of the voting box column on the right, and the alphabetical lists attracted less comment here than on the combined paper
  
- less positively there were concerns about practical aspects of using these ballot papers
  
- some thought that it would be more difficult managing two separate papers than a single combined paper
  
- there were complaints that there was little guidance on how to fill them in:
    - no instruction boxes, no clear heading
    - instructions varied between the papers - *Vote for one candidate only* on constituency paper but not on regional paper; and *Mark your X in a box* on regional paper but not on constituency paper
    - some struggled to understand what was required of them if they saw these ballot papers first

  "It's not as good as the last one, it's not as clear because it doesn't include any instructions."

  Female, DE, 17-24, Glasgow

- the inclusion of individuals’ names on the regional paper was not always noticed and attracted little comment
• when it was noticed or pointed out, some voters were curious why they were included, but it appeared to make little difference to the appeal of this ballot paper

• given that voters seemed to vote primarily for their favoured party rather than for a party candidate, the inclusion of party candidates' names had little impact on them

"None of these names mean anything to me."
Female, BC1, 25-34, Dundee

• a small minority felt that it was a good idea in principle because it gave voters an idea of who they were voting for

• another minority, mainly better informed voters, seemed to make their choice based on the names listed under the parties

3.4 **Combined, peach and white, columns in centre, corresponding lists** (design 2)

• this ballot paper was fairly well liked but rarely chosen as the preferred option

• it had two of the preferred components: two colours; corresponding lists of parties and constituency candidates

• but because the voting box columns were in the middle it was thought to have a slightly unbalanced look

• this seemed to give the paper a skewed feel to it and made the paper less appealing to many voters

3.5 **Combined, both columns peach, columns in centre, corresponding lists** (design 5)

• this ballot paper was broadly acceptable though not often the preferred paper

• the use of one colour for both voting sections was disliked for several reasons

  - the peach used was highly unattractive; almost a whole page of it was a little off-putting
- it was felt to be more sensible to have the two different votes with different background colours to distinguish clearly between them

- it prompted more complaints than other designs about difficulty reading the text; this was attributed to the fact that both sides had a peach background

3.6 Combined, peach and white, columns in centre, alphabetical lists (design 4)

- this paper was the least well liked

- in addition to concerns about voting box columns in the middle, it had alphabetical lists of parties and candidates

- participants felt that the combination of these two features gave this ballot paper a slightly disorganised feel

- the impression was that it had not been designed with as much care as the other papers
E. METHOD AND SAMPLE

1. Research objectives

- the research explored…

- response to each of the ballot paper designs in terms of comprehension, clarity of instructions and overall ease of use

- the useability and performance of each design in terms of how easy they make it for voters to make the choice they want

- perceptions of the layout and format of each design

- response to different positioning of the voting column: on combined ballot papers on the right of each list of candidates versus in the centre of the ballot paper

- reactions to the listing of candidates in alphabetical order vs listing by political party

- differences in response by demographics (age, gender, socio-economic class), locality and whether or not participants identify with a particular political party

2. Methodology

- 100 short qualitative interviews were conducted in four locations in Scotland

- interviews were semi-structured and lasted about 20 minutes

- respondents were recruited on the street and interviewed immediately, with no prior warning

- they were asked to use each of the five proposed ballot papers in polling booths as if taking part in a real election, and then discussed them with the interviewer
3. **Sample**

- 100 interviews with people who will be eligible to vote in Scotland by May 2007 and who intend to vote
- 25 each in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Inverness
- 20 aged 17-24; 18 aged 25-34; 19 aged 35-45; 23 aged 46-60; 20 aged 61+
- 53 men; 47 women
- 35 BC1 social class; 26 C2; 39 DE
- 48 with five or more Standard grade passes, GCSEs at grade C or above, or O levels at grade 6 and above; 52 with fewer than five
- 67 who identified with a political party; 33 who did not or would not say
- Of those who did, 25 identified most with Labour, 21 with the SNP, 8 with the Liberal Democratic Party, 8 with the Conservative Party, 4 with the SSP, 1 with the Green Party
- Interviews were conducted 11\textsuperscript{th}-20\textsuperscript{th} July 2006 by Rob Hartley, Lisa Malangone, Tim Porter and Amy Turton
APPENDIX
Name: ........................................................................................................................................
Address: .................................................................................................................................

........................................................................ Tel: ...............................................................

Sex:  Male ( )  Female ( )

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

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

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

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

QB  Are you a member of any of the following?

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

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

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

  Yes ( ) TO QC  No ( ) TO Q1

QD  How long ago was the last time?

WRITE IN __________________________
CLOSE IF ATTENDED WITHIN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS.

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

WRITE IN __________________________
CLOSE IF RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH TOPIC. OTHERWISE TO Q1.
Q1  Could you please tell me your age and, if you are working, your occupation?

Age:  16-24 ( )  25-34 ( )  35-45 ( )  46-60 ( )  61 or over ( )

Occupation (HoH): ..............................................................................................................................

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

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

(WRITE IN AND SEE QUOTA ......................................................................................................................)

IF BORN IN THE UK OR OTHER COUNTRY ON THE ACCOMPANYING LIST, GO TO Q3.
OTHERWISE CLOSE, DO NOT RECRUIT

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

Yes   ( ) SEE QUOTA GO TO Q3b
No   ( ) GO TO Q4

Q3b  How many do you have?

1-4   ( ) SEE QUOTA GO TO Q4
5 or more   ( ) SEE QUOTA GO TO Q4

HALF THE SAMPLE SHOULD HAVE 5 OR MORE STANDARD GRADE PASSES, GCSEs AT GRADE C OR ABOVE, OR O LEVELS AT GRADE 6 OR ABOVE

HALF THE SAMPLE SHOULD HAVE FEWER THAN 5 STANDARD GRADE PASSES, GCSEs AT GRADE C OR ABOVE, OR O LEVELS AT GRADE 6 OR ABOVE

Q4  As far as you know, are you eligible to vote in the Scottish Parliament elections?

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

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

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

Q6  Do you imagine you will vote in the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections?

Yes   ( ) GO TO Q7
No   ( ) CLOSE. DO NOT RECRUIT
Q7a I would like to ask you about your attitudes to political parties. Could you tell me which of the following statements you most agree with?

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

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

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

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

Q7b Could you tell me which party this is?

(Write in)........................................................................................................

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

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

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

RECRUIT AS APPROPRIATE.
TOPIC GUIDE – 810

Background

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

Response to ballot paper designs (rotate order)

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

After using each ballot paper…

- what are their initial impressions?
- is it clear to them who and what they were voting for? Do not probe, but listen for references to regional member and constituency member
- what do they like and dislike about it?
- what stands out about it?
- how easy is it to follow and how easy do they imagine it would be to use in the polling booth (or at home if a postal voter?)

What are their views of:

- the instructions in the text
- the instructions at the top of the column(s)
- the layout and overall visual appearance
- the colours
Comparing the five different options, what are their views of:

- the options of having two separate ballot papers for the Scottish Parliament region and the Scottish Parliament constituency vs having one paper for both? Which do they feel is easiest to use and understand, and why?

- the different ways of positioning of the voting column on the ballot paper: on the right of each list of candidates vs in the centre of the ballot paper

- the fact that the list of regional candidates is on the left and the constituency list is on the right

- the listing of candidates in alphabetical order compared with listing them by political party. Did they notice this?

- the most effective layout and visual appearance, and the design which makes it easiest to make the right choice

- how clear and helpful the instructions are. Did they notice these when they first saw the ballot paper?

Listen for but do not prompt for any mentions of:

- the position of the parties’ emblems

- the colours of the ballot papers

**Summing up**

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

Overall impressions; suggestions for other design approaches or styles, and any other comments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scottish Parliament Region: Highlands and Islands</th>
<th>Design 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mark your X in a Box</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST PARTY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(David McLetchie, James Douglas-Hamilton, Gordon Buchan, Ian Mowat, Gordon Lindhurst, Peter Finnie, Lindsay Paterson, Rosemary Macarthur, John Smart)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Robin Harper, Mark Ballard, Marta McGlyn, Bill Brockie, Claire Brady, Anne Pearson, Ian Baxter, Joan Carter)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Catriona Munro, Ann Henderson, Simon Tieman, Colette Davie, Sally Lee, Catherine Sutherland, Adam Hug)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mike Pringle, Marilyne MacLaren, Andy Myles, Sebastian Tombs, Jacqui Bell, John Longstaff, Gary Peacock, Scott Wilson)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY (SNP)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kenny MacAskill, Fiona Hyslop, Ian McKee, Anne Dana, Peter Johnston, Graham Sutherland, Kevin Pringle, Alex Orr, Greg McCarra, Sheena Cleland, Jim Bryce)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Colin Fox, Catriona Grant, Pat Smith, Willie Black, Derek Durkin, Shirley Gibb, Julie Smith, Mick Napier, Bill Scott, Bob Goupillot)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Helen Mary</td>
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<td>Scottish Parliament Constituency: Inverness East, Nairn, &amp; Lochaber</td>
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**VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Party</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **GIBB**   | Shirley Margaret  
8 Mentone Terrace, Inverness | Scottish Socialist Party        |
| **HALL**   | Geoffrey Gordon Craufurd  
Flat 9, 15 Duncan Street, Inverness | Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party |
| **MacKAY** | Alexander Murdoch  
1F4 35 Bryson Road, Inverness | Scottish National Party (SNP)  |
| **MURDOCH** | Angus John  
84 Liberton Brae, Inverness | Scottish Labour Party           |
| **PRINGLE** | Michael Stanley Robert  
26 Morningside Park, Inverness | Scottish Liberal Democrats       |
| **SANDERSON** | George Irving  
16 Haddington Close, Inverness | Scottish Green Party            |
| **WILSON** | Peter Lachlan  
3 Brae Street, Inverness | Independent                     |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Members</th>
<th>Vote once only (X)</th>
<th>Inverness East, Nairn, &amp; Lochaber Constituency Member</th>
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This vote decides the share of the seats which each of the parties listed below will have in the Parliament for the Highlands and Islands Region. Vote by putting a cross in the box immediately after the party you choose.

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This vote decides the candidate who will be elected constituency member for the Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber constituency. Vote by putting a cross in the box immediately before the candidate you choose.

Inverness East, Nairn, & Lochaber Constituency Member

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Inverness East, Nairn, & Lochaber

Constituency Member

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This vote decides the candidate who will be elected constituency member for the Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber constituency. Vote by putting a cross in the box immediately before the candidate you choose.
# Election of the Scottish Parliament

**You have two votes**

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