Voting in a Local Government By-Election

Ward 5 – Heldon and Laich

Thursday 7 March 2013

Single Transferable Vote (STV) Electoral System

Local Government elections are conducted under the **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** electoral system. This means you should **rank the candidates** in order of your preference.

There is **one** vacancy to be filled at this by-election. You vote using **numbers**:

- Instead of using a cross, number the candidates in the order of your choice.
- You should record your vote by placing a '**1**' in the box to the right of the name of the candidate of your first choice, a '**2**' in the box to the right of the name of the candidate of your second choice, a '**3**' in the box to the right of the name of the candidate of your third choice. You can mark as many or as few candidates as you like.

How does a candidate get elected at a by-election?

Under the STV voting system a candidate requires a certain minimum number of votes to be elected. This minimum number is called **the quota**. The first step is to count the number of **valid** votes and then calculate the quota required by a candidate to be elected.

The formula for the quota is:

$$\left[\textbf{(Valid votes cast)} \div \textbf{(seats to be filled +1)} \right] + \quad \textbf{1 vote}$$

In this by-election there is **ONE SEAT** to fill, so the quota will be:

$$\left[\textbf{(Valid votes cast} \div \textbf{(1+1)} \right] + \textbf{ 1 vote}$$

This means that the winning candidate therefore needs to receive 50% plus 1 of the total valid votes cast.

Although the count will be conducted electronically the process is the same:

- The first preferences, the **1s** marked on each ballot paper, are counted.
- If a candidate gets enough **1s** to reach or exceed the quota they are elected.
- If no-one reaches or exceeds the quota the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded from the contest and their votes transferred.
- These votes are transferred to the other candidates based on the next available preference marked on the ballot paper. When using votes from a candidate who has been eliminated, these votes carry their **full** value of **1**.
- If no-one reaches or exceeds the quota the count continues by eliminating the next candidate who has the least number of votes.
- The count progresses through as many stages as are required until a candidate reaches or exceeds the quota.
- If only two candidates are remaining then the candidate having the most votes at that stage will be declared to be elected (even though they may not have reached the quota).

If you have any feedback/comments on the conduct of this by-election we would be pleased to hear from you. Please contact:

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