

City of Edinburgh Council By-Elections
Ward 15: Southside/Newington
Ward 17: Portobello/Craigmillar

3 September 2026

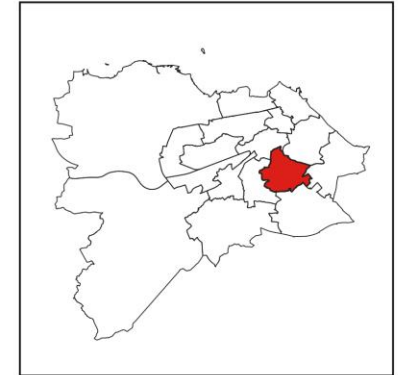
Candidates and Election Agents Briefing

12 August 2026

Elections

Edinburgh 2026

Southside and Newington Ward

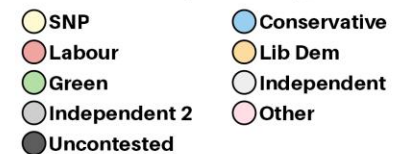


City of Edinburgh
Council

2022 Results

Councillor 1:	Labour
Councillor 2:	Green
Councillor 3:	SNP
Councillor 4:	Lib Dem
Councillor 5:	

Estimated Lead per Polling District



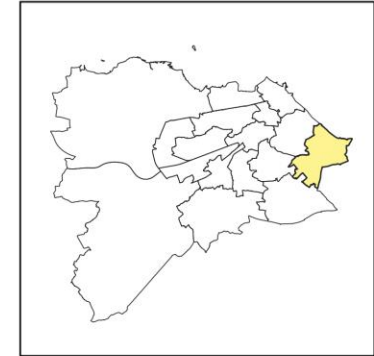
2022 LOCAL
ELECTIONS
ballotbox.scot



Elections

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Portobello and Craigmillar Ward



City of Edinburgh Council

2022 Results

Councillor 1:	SNP
Councillor 2:	Labour
Councillor 3:	Green
Councillor 4:	Conservative
Councillor 5:	

Estimated Lead per Polling District

SNP	Conservative
Labour	Lib Dem
Green	Independent
Independent 2	Other
Uncontested	



Electorate Numbers 1 July 2026

Ward	Total Registered Electors	Postal Voters
Southside / Newington	25,348	4,410 (17.3%)
Portobello/Craigmillar	28,436	5,053 (17.7%)

Purpose of the Briefing

- **Overview of the election:**
what you need to know to take part?
 - General Background
 - Timetables and key dates
 - Campaign
 - Polling, postal voting and the count
 - Integrity

Topics

- Who's who
- Election timetable
- Nominations
- Campaigning
- Agents
- Postal votes
- Day of poll
- Single Transferable Vote
- Counting of votes
- Campaign spending
- Contacts



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- The **Returning Officer** is the person responsible for running the election. The Returning Officer is **Paul Lawrence**, the Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council

Who's who

- The **Electoral Registration Officer** is responsible for maintaining the register of electors and absent voters' lists. The Electoral Registration Officer is **Rory Mckenzie**
- Contact details are given at the end

The Election Team

Day-to-day
contacts

- **Chris Highcock** – Depute Returning Officer
- **Scott Russell / Alistair Smith** – Polling & Logistics
- **Sam Ho** – Postal Voting
- **Fran Cattanach** – The Count
- **Niall MacGalloway** – Depute Electoral Registration Officer

The Election Team

Day-to-day
contacts



**Chris
Highcock**
Depute Returning
Officer



**Fran
Cattanach**
Count/ Operations
Manager



**Scott
Russell**
Polling and Logistics

What is different for Scottish elections (council and Holyrood)

- **Minimum voting age is 16** not 18
- **No photo ID** to vote in person
- **No deposit** to stand as a candidate
- **Postal Votes** – voters who applied on-line at the UKPGE will **not** automatically have a postal vote for this election (**but this will change for next year**)
- **Postal Votes** – no form when handling in postal votes, no restrictions on handling or numbers handed in
- **PR/STV** - not first past the post
 - Use numbers to vote – in sequence – **not** an X
- **eCount** - not manual

Publication of the notice of election	-35		Wednesday 15 July 2026
Delivery of nomination papers	-34		Each working day (between 10am and 4pm) from Thursday 16 July 2026
Last day to publish notice of election	-28		Not later than Friday 24 July 2026
Deadline for the delivery of nomination papers	-23		Not later than 4pm on Friday 30 July 2026
Deadline for withdrawal of nomination	-23		
Deadline for notification of appointment of election agents	-23		
Publication of notice of poll	-23		As soon as practicable after 4.00pm on Friday 31 July 2026
Issue of poll cards	n/s		31 July 2026
Registration deadline	-12		Midnight on Tuesday 18 August 2026
Deadline for new postal vote applications and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes	-11		Not later than 5.00pm on Wednesday 19 August 2026
Issue of Postal votes	n/s		21 August 2026
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies	-6		Not later than 5.00pm on Wednesday 26 August 2026
Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents	-5		Thursday 27 August 2026
POLLING DAY	0		7.00am – 10.00pm on Thursday 03 September 2026
Deadline for emergency proxy applications	0		Not later than 5.00pm on Thursday 03 September 2026
Last time for re-issue of spoilt and lost postal votes	0		Not later than 10.00pm on Thursday 03 September 2026
Last time to alter the register due to clerical error or court appeal	0		Not later than 9.00pm on Thursday 03 September 2026
COUNT	-		From 10pm on Thursday 3 September 2026
Last day to submit election spending returns	+35d		Thursday 08 October 2026

Nominations closed 31 July

- Ballot paper is fixed
- Candidates cannot withdraw

Ward 15 – Southside/Newington	Ward 17- Portobello/Craigmillar
13 Candidates	10 Candidates



**Portobello/Craigmillar
Ward 17**

**Council By-election
3 September 2026**

Register to vote
don't miss the deadline

Register to vote by **18 August**
Apply for a postal vote by **19 August**

Remember 16-17 year olds can
vote in this election

edinburgh.gov.uk/elections

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



**Portobello/Craigmillar
Ward 17**

**Council By-election
3 September 2026**

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Public Awareness

- Returning Officer has a duty to **promote participation**
- Two phase campaign
 - Registration - deadline 18 August, postals deadline 19 August
 - Turnout
- Social Media
- Media releases
- Lamp post wraps
- Posters
- Also rely on candidates to promote

Election Agent

- Responsible for the proper management of your election campaign; particularly its **financial management**.
- Notification of appointment must have reached the Returning Officer by 4pm on **31 July** . Form was included in nomination pack.
- You will have become your own agent by default if none was appointed.
- Notice published – RO must publish names and office addresses

Other Agents

Polling (Count) Postal

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf:
 - The RO requires notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by **27 August**
 - The appointment of postal voting agents attending a particular opening session must be made before the start of the session. The RO will give 48 hours notice.
 - Forms are available for notifying the RO.
 - **Represent the voter: important integrity check, eyes and ears of the elector**
 - **Personation**

Access to electoral register/ absent voting lists

- Access by candidates once you are officially a candidate
- Make written request to the ERO – forms are available from the office / are included in your nomination pack.
- Only use data for permitted purposes including to help you campaign

Campaigning

- **Do** use imprints on all your campaign material, including websites.
 - “Imprint” = the name and address of the printer and of the promoter
- **Do** comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners
- **Do not** produce material that looks like a poll card
- **Do not** pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business)
- Please contact us if intending to use chalk stencil paint...

NO POSTERS ON LAMP POSTS

A Boards – only on polling day – take care with placement.

Code of conduct for campaigners

- Campaigners are an essential element of a healthy democracy, but their activities should not bring into question the integrity of the electoral process
- Electoral registration and absent vote applications:
 - Ensure forms fully conform to the requirements of electoral law
 - Include the ERO's address for the return of forms
 - Ensure unaltered applications are sent to ERO within **two working days**
 - Make sure electors understand implications of applying for an absent vote
 - Do not encourage postal ballot pack redirection
 - Do not encourage electors to appoint a campaigner as proxy

Code of conduct for campaigners continued



- Postal ballot packs:
 - Never touch a postal ballot paper
 - Never observe electors completing their postal vote.
 - Never handle or take any completed ballot paper or postal ballot pack from voters
- **Campaigning outside polling stations:**
 - You are allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including public spaces outside polling places.
 - Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter.
- **We expect good standards of behaviour**

Postal Votes and Polling Day

Polling Places Ward 15

Polling station	Station/Box number	Register
Nelson Hall Community Centre	1	EC15A
Nelson Hall Community Centre	2	EC15A,EC15B
Nelson Hall Community Centre	3	EC15B,SC15C
Blackford and Grange Parish Church Centre	4	SC15A
St. Catherine's Argyle Church	5	SC15B
Newington Trinity Church	6	SS15B
Newington Trinity Church	7	SS15B,SS15A
Reid Memorial Church Hall	8	SS15C
Reid Memorial Church Hall	9	SS15C
75th Braid Scouts' Millar Hall	10	SS15D
Cameron House Community Education Centre	11	SS15E

Polling Places Ward 17

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Polling station	Station/Box number	Register
Portobello Library	1	EEM17A
Portobello Library	2	EEM17A
Branch Out Together	3	EEM17B
St Mark's Episcopal Church, 287 Portobello High Street	4	EEM17C
St Mark's Episcopal Church, 287 Portobello High Street	5	EEM17C
Bingham Community Centre	6	EEM17D
St Martins Parish Church	7	EEM17E
St Martins Parish Church	8	EEM17E
Craigmillar Library	9	EEM17F,EEM17G
Craigmillar Library	10	EEM17G
Hays Business Centre	12	EEM17H,EEM17J
Newcraighall Leith Victoria FC	13	EEM17I
Hays Business Centre	11	EEM17J

How do they vote?

- **Polling Places**
 - 23 Polling Stations, 1 ballot box in each
- **Postal Votes**
 - Deadline for applications is 5pm on 19 August – same for changes to existing postal and proxy arrangements
 - Very important element of the election
 - Approx 18% of electoral roll; likely to be over 50% of counted votes
 - Confidence in the system depends on integrity of campaigners: Code of Conduct!
 - Must be seen to be fair, no question of interference
- **Proxy Votes**
 - Both at polling places and for postals





Postal Votes

**dispatched on
21 August**

- **Code of conduct** – no candidate or supporter should put themselves in a position where their honesty or integrity, or that of the candidate or party, can be questioned
- For security reasons, absent voters are required to provide signature and date of birth on applications
 - these are stored electronically and checked against the postal voting statement returned with the postal vote
- It is important that any received applications are returned to the Electoral Registration Office and postal vote packs are returned to the elections office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time for processing
- If you are considering printing your own application forms, they must contain all the legislative requirements – but we'd prefer you use the official ones

Postal Votes (cont.)

- Postal vote openings
 - *2 and 3 September Council HQ*
 - *Ballot Papers will be face down*
 - *Signature and DOB checked electronically*
 - *Secrecy Requirement*
- Each candidate may appoint **agents** to observe the opening of postal votes
 - Appointments must be made in writing before the opening session is due to begin
 - **ACCESS CONTROLLED**
- **Lost or spoilt** can be replaced



Proxy Voting

- Deadline is Wednesday 26 August 5pm
- Emergency proxy application if voter becomes unable to vote in person due to medical emergency or work reasons
- Cause must arise after the deadline of 5pm on 26 August
- Emergency proxy deadline is 5pm on Polling Day
- **Voters who may be away from home need to consider if proxy or postal is best for their circumstances**



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Polling Day

7am to 10pm

- **Electronic Registers**
- Staff briefed on STV process
 - **“Remember to use numbers”**
 - Consistent script
- Conduct around polling places
- Information about where the elector will vote
 - Poll card, Election Office, ERO
- Polling Agents
- Election Office open from 6am to 10pm for queries or problems relating to the administration of the election
- **Tellers**
- Postal votes – can be handed into any polling place or delivered to the Council HQ until 10pm.

Polling Day

Key information

- Voters in the polling station or in a queue outside the polling station at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper.
- A person in a **queue** at a polling station at 10pm waiting to hand in postal vote can do so after 10pm.
- Behaviour of “tellers”
 - Dos and Don’ts!
 - Requirement for secrecy
 - Obey instructions of Presiding Officer, Returning Officer, Police Scotland
 - Tellers can only approach electors **on the way out** of the polling station
 - Candidates and Agents are responsible for managing the behaviour of their supporters



**Selfies...not allowed so as to preserve
secret ballot!**

Polling Agents

- **Guidance from Electoral Commission**
 - Canvassing / Literature
 - General Behaviour
- **Must have and wear ID in the Polling stations**
 - should also introduce themselves to the Presiding Officer and sign in.
- **No Posters on Street Furniture; report to Election Office**
- **A Board Policy**
- **Problems on the day: contact Elections Office from 6:15am 0131 469 3126**



Voting and counting



Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- Voters will rank candidates in their order of preference using numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc).
- Voters can rank as many or as few candidates as they wish.
- The same number cannot be used twice and there should not be a break in the sequence.

Ballot papers

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL - WARD 17 - PORTOBELLO/CRAIGMILLAR

One of the candidates listed below will be elected.

You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.

Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice.
Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice.
Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.

BALLANTINE David Craig (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
DEEP NARAIN Nial (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
GREGSON Pete 27 Riverside Grove, Edinburgh, EH12 5QS		☐
MARTINICO Lorenzo (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
MCGILVRAY Silas (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
MCLAUGHLIN Andrew (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
OLECH Peter (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
OWEN L is (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
WYKE Jim Patrick (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
YOUNG Haris (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL - WARD 15 - SOUTHSIDE/NEWINGTON

One of the candidates listed below will be elected.

You can make as many or as few choices as you wish.

Put the number 1 in the voting box next to your first choice.
Put the number 2 in the voting box next to your second choice.
Put the number 3 in the voting box next to your third choice. And so on.

ELLIOTT Ruth (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
EMMS Derrick (address in the West Lothian Council area)		☐
GASTEL ALEJANDRE Isabela (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
KEIRDASHIAN Roisin (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
KHOVANO V Arlie (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
LAYDEN Nick (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
LUCAS Richard Crewe (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
MACKENZIE Sam Alexander (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
MOFFAT Sean McGregor (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
NEILL Gary (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
ROWBOTHAM Markham (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
SHILLCOCK Richard (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐
WILKINSON Marc (address in the City of Edinburgh Council area)		☐



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- Council HQ, Waverley Court, East Market Street
 - **Ballot Box Opening and then the count (scanning) starts at 10pm**
- Count centre will open to candidates, agents and observers from 9:30pm;
- Photo ID and Admission Pass
- Observers – Electoral Commission
- Candidates, election agents and counting agents appointed by the candidate are entitled to attend. **Limits to number of counting agents: Candidate plus one in count area due to space constraints**
- Counting of Unused and Spoilt Papers

The Count

3 Sept

The

Result

- **Recount** – a recount would just be running the algorithm again, so challenge during the process not at the end
- Please pay attention to adjudication especially **RO adjudication** of ballot papers
- **Speeches** – winning candidate only; NO PA (please keep speech short)
- Induction for successful candidate
 - Please bring **NI number, bank account number and sort code**

Some other things

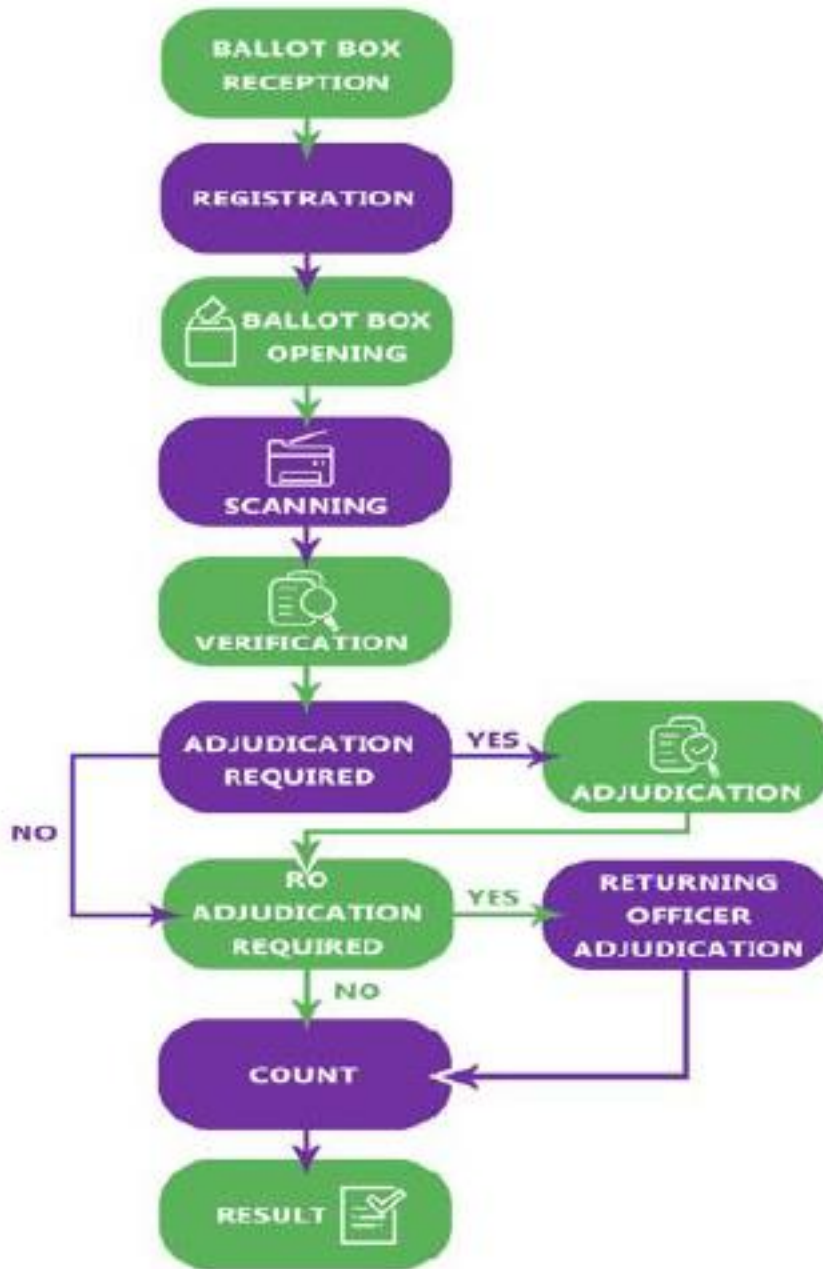
- If successful plan to be busy from **Monday 7 September**
- Sign declaration of acceptance of office
- Induction will start immediately
- Photos for pass
- Photos for website
- Office, laptop, phone, office support

STV

- Weighted Inclusive Gregory method of counting
- Voting for **Individuals** NOT Parties
- The quota
- The count procedure
- Transfer of surpluses
- Exclusion of candidates

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- **Papers scanned** – which also counts them
- **Adjudication** – making sure the system understands what is on the front of each paper
- **RO adjudication** – doubtful papers either accepted or rejected
- **Count** – STV count process is run
- **Adjudication Guidance**

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- Candidates are elected if they reach the Quota
- $\text{Quota} = ((\text{valid votes cast}) \div (\text{seats to be filled} + 1)) + 1$
- Fractions are ignored
- In this by-election **ONE SEAT** to be filled
 - So the quota will be $((\text{valid votes cast}) \div (1 + 1)) + 1$ or
 - $\text{Valid Votes} \div 2$ plus 1 vote

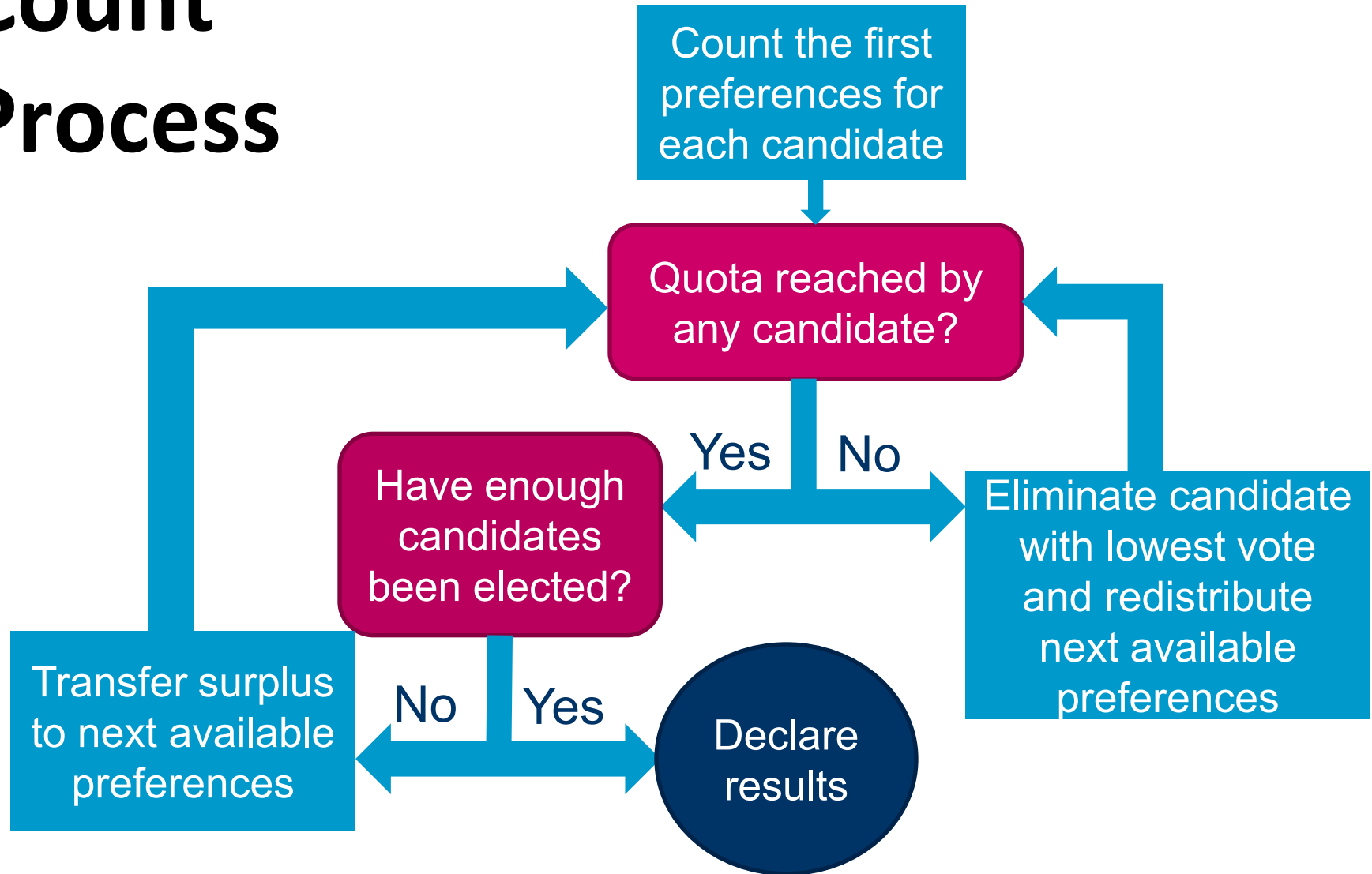
i.e. successful candidates must get 1/2 of the valid votes +1

Example from June 2025

Ward	Electorate	Turnout	Votes cast	Valid Votes	Number of members	Quota
Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart	18,284	33.1%	6,264	6,225	1	3,113

- IF only ONE vacancy quota would have been
 $(6225 \div (1+1)) + 1 = 3112+1 = 3113$

Count Process



Non Transferable Papers

- Occasionally a ballot paper can't be **transferred** because:
 - the voter has not expressed any further preferences, or
 - remaining preferences are for candidates who have already been excluded
- Each ballot paper is used to the greatest extent possible, according to the wishes of the voter

An Electronic Process

- Once RO adjudication is complete - the system understands what is on the face of each paper - the count is run electronically
- This takes only a few seconds.
- Candidates, Election Agents are then briefed privately on the result in Candidate Briefing Room
- Result declared



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Candidates' spending

**What you spent
and where you
got it**

***(not what you
can claim!)***

- Defined as certain expenditure 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' after the date they become a candidate
- Responsibility of **election agent**
- Spending limits :
 - **£840 + 7 pence per elector in ward on register in force on 24 July 2026**
- Must get and keep receipts (over £20)
- What you spend on activities to promote your candidacy or to criticise other candidates in the run-up to the election
 - Transparent - prove the election is not "bought"

Spending limits



Campaign spending returns

- Returns due 35 days after result of election **8 October**
- Returns made public by **Returning Officer**
- Failure to submit a campaign spending return is an offence
- **Successful candidates who fail to submit returns may not sit or vote in the council**

**Inspection and Supply of Marked Registers /
Absent Voters List**

Costs, consistent with costs in other elections

**Marked
Registers**

“the sum of £10, plus for a copy—

(a) in printed form, £2 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) covered by the request; and

(b) in data form, £1 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) covered by the request, and, for the purposes of this regulation, a request for a copy of the whole or the same part of the marked register or lists in both printed and data form may be treated as two separate requests.”.

Contacts

- **Elections office**

City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ

0131 469 3126

elections@edinburgh.gov.uk

- **Electoral registration office**

Electoral Registration Officer, 17A South Gyle
Crescent, Edinburgh, Telephone: 0131 344 2500,
enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk

- **Electoral Commission**

Scotland Office - 0131 225 0200

- **Police (101 if necessary)**

- **SPOC – Inspector Colin Fordyce**

- Colin.Fordyce@scotland.police.uk

Integrity Issues



- Seriousness of Electoral Offences
 - Integrity is fundamental
- Police Scotland (SPOC)
 - Bribery
 - Treating
 - Undue Influence
 - Personation
 - False Statements
- Candidates, Agents and campaigners have critical role to ensure integrity and **confidence** in the electoral process
- All allegations of electoral fraud will be investigated robustly by the Police Scotland in consultation with RO

Any questions?

- Elections Office **0131 469 3126**
- Electoral Registration Officer **0131 344 2500**

Thank You