

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL

Title of Report: Voting arrangements for General Election November 2013

Paper No: 146/13

Date: Date of EXCO Meeting

Report of: Attorney General/Registrar General

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to put voting options for the November General Election before Executive Council to enable them to decide which option they approve.

2.0 Recommendations

(a) It is recommended that Executive Council approve Option B described below for the practical arrangements for delivery of the General Election in November 2013.

(b) It is recommended that the General Election be held on Thursday 7th November 2013.

3.0 Summary of Financial Implications

	2013/14	Full Year
	£	£
Operating Budget	£2,000	£nil

4.0 Background

4.1 The existing Legislative Assembly is due to dissolve in September 2013 and an indicative date for the ensuing General Election is 7th November 2013. There are a number of formalities to observe in holding an election and the approval of the above recommendations will enable the preparation for the General Election to commence in accordance with the statutory timetable.

4.2 The General Election will create an additional workload for those involved and it is possible that some temporary resource will be required in the Registry to prepare for and manage the election. The work involved in delivering the election will have an impact on the progress of other work carried out in the Registry.

4.3 The Electoral Ordinance requires the minimum appointment of the following polling places:-

(a) static polling stations on polling day at the following locations:

- (i) one place in Stanley
- (ii) one place outside Stanley on East Falkland;
- (iii) one place on the West Falkland; and

(b) mobile polling to the hospital and sheltered accommodation.

4.4 For the last General Election in 2009 in addition to the above statutory requirements, arrangements were made for half a day static polling stations at Hill Cove, Port Howard and Hope Cottage. There were no polling stations on the outer Islands by FIGAS charter flight and voters at these locations were successfully encouraged to register for postal or proxy votes beforehand. The cost of this was around £7,600.

4.5 For the recent referendum special arrangements were made to hold the referendum over two days. The arrangements over the two days included, allocated polling places extra static polling places, additional mobile coverage and FIGAS flights to certain islands. The cost of this was around £13,000 and involved a considerable additional workload for those involved in delivering the referendum. It is not recommended that we replicate the referendum polling arrangements for the General Election.

5.0 Proposed Options for the General Election

5.1 The following options for voting arrangements for the November general election have been identified.

Option A – static and mobile polling over one day without FIGAS or mobiles outside of Stanley

(a) static polling stations on both polling days at:-

- (i) Town Hall, Stanley;
- (ii) Goose Green;
- (iii) Fox Bay; and

(b) mobile polling stations only to Sheltered Accommodation, KEMH, HMP (if there are any prisoners on the electoral register)

Estimated cost: £5000 - £6000

Saving on budget £4,000 - £5,000

Option B – static and mobile polling over one day including FIGAS

(a) static polling stations at:-

- (i) Town Hall, Stanley;
- (ii) Goose Green;

- (iii) Fox Bay; and
- (b) mobile polling stations to Sheltered Accommodation, KEMH, HMP (if there are any prisoners on the electoral register); from Port Howard to Hill Cove and return; three to four mobiles on the East Falklands (routes still to confirm)

FIGAS charter flight to all the Islands were there were no arrangements made for postal or proxy votes (excluding Beaver, New Island and West Point)

Estimated cost: £11,000 - £12,000

Additional cost £1,000 - £2,000

Option C – static and mobile polling over one day without FIGAS

- (a) static polling stations at:-
 - (i) Town Hall, Stanley;
 - (ii) Goose Green;
 - (iii) Fox Bay; and
- (b) mobile polling stations to Sheltered Accommodation, KEMH, HMP (if there are any prisoners on the electoral register); to Hill Cove from Port Howard and return;

No FIGAS charter flight to Islands, arrangements made for postal or proxy votes

Estimated cost: £10,500 - £11,000

Additional cost £500 - £1,000

5.2 Option A meets the statutory minimum, and is the cheapest. This would mean that voters outside Stanley who are not able to access, or to conveniently access, the polling stations at Goose Green and Fox Bay on polling day would have to register for and make practical arrangements for postal, proxy, or postal proxy voting. Voters without regular flights would be best advised to make arrangements for one of the proxy voting options, because a postal vote still requires the ballot paper to be delivered and collected within fairly short timeframe.

5.3 Option B, whilst being the most expensive is recommended as it would cover the whole of the Islands. It may be possible to dispense with the FIGAS flights if arrangements can be made for postal and proxy votes from the Islands.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 The Registry budget currently has £10,000 allocated for the general election. This would be sufficient for option A

6.2 If Members prefer option B, an additional £2000 will be required for the Registrar General's operating budget for the year 2013/14.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 Option A meets the Legislative requirements but under the electoral ordinance, the Governor may appoint additional polling places beyond the statutory minimum described above.
- 7.2 This report should be reading conjunction with the report to this meeting in the proposed amendments to the Electoral Ordinance.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 Additional resources required may include hiring casual staff or staff working extra hours. Casual staff for the referendum were paid at £7.89 per hour (the 1st step of grade G) and it is recommended that if casual staff are required that they are paid at the equivalent rate which is now £8.29.same rate.