

The Highland Council
Highland Council - 18 December 2014

Agenda Item	16
Report No	HC/41/14

Election Poster Policy

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report provides the information requested at Council on the 30 October 2014 relating to policy on the display of election posters. Members are invited to **NOTE** the report.

1. Background

- 1.1. At the Council meeting on 30th October 2014 Members **AGREED** that a report would be submitted to the next Council meeting to include information on the practices of other Councils in Scotland and that this report should also include input from the Police Service and indicate what expenditure had been incurred by the Council during the course of the Referendum with regard to the display of election posters.
- 1.2. The Council has a policy that allows and regulates the display of election campaign posters on items of street furniture, such as lighting columns, on roads for which it is the Roads Authority and this is reproduced at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3. Transport Scotland as Roads Authority for Trunk Roads does not allow election campaign posters to be put up on these roads.

2. Situation

- 2.1. Research into election poster policy across Scotland carried out by North Lanarkshire Council a few years ago has been refreshed very recently. While the full picture has not yet been confirmed, and noting that a couple of authorities are reconsidering their own policies, we have preliminary results as presented in **Appendix B**. Indications are that between 10 and 12 of the 32 Scottish Councils will allow posters to be put up at the next election.
- 2.2. Information on voter turnout in each authority at the 2012 election is also presented in **Appendix B**. While it will be seen that turnout was generally higher in 2012 where Council policies **currently** allow posters on street furniture, it must be noted that there are many factors which influence voter turnout and it would be overly simplistic to offer any analysis of the link

between poster policy and turnout on this evidence alone.

- 2.3. Election agents are responsible for removing their posters within 7 days of the election and experience is that posters are in the main removed within that timescale. There is rarely any issue and removal of posters and ties by Council staff is in any case not prioritised ahead of day to day work.
- 2.4. The local Police Commander has advised that there are no issues for the Police in the Highland area associated with the display of election posters.
- 2.5. The Council's cost recording systems do not include specific analysis codes to which time for dealing with election posters can be allocated. Therefore it is not possible to indicate what expenditure has been incurred in this respect. However Members can be assured that the costs are insignificant.

3. Implications

- 3.1. There are no resource, legal, Climate change / Carbon Clever, risk, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to **NOTE** the report.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 5 December 2014

Author: Richard Evans, Head of Roads and Transport

TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DISPLAY OF ELECTION POSTERS ON VERGES & LIGHTING COLUMNS

The Council's general policy on the display of election posters was reconsidered by the Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee Highland Council on 27th January 2005.

The Policy will be issued to each election Candidate/Election Agent.

The Policy applies only to roadside verges in the direct ownership of the Highland Council.

Road Safety is of paramount concern. The Council will permit the display of election posters on roadside verges and lighting columns within the Council area in connection with any election but only subject to the following conditions:-

1. Before posters are erected, the Chairman or Secretary of the relevant party association (or candidate if there is no such association) must state by letter to the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services that the association (or, where appropriate, the candidate) agrees to indemnify the Council against any damages as a result of the display of election posters. Associations (and candidates) must ensure that they are in a position to meet any successful claims in these respects.
2. Posters must not be erected prior to the date of announcement of an election.
3. Posters must not in any circumstances be located upon the central reserve of dual carriageways, refuge islands in the centre of roadways, traffic signal posts, control boxes or upon roundabouts.
4. Posters must be located at the rear of any verge provision and in any case no closer than 1.5 metres to the running surface of any carriageway.
5. Posters must not be located so as to interfere with the visibility required for persons emerging from side roads or private accesses.
6. Posters must be so mounted that the poster and mount will not afford any resistance or damage to a vehicle coming into contact with them.
7. Posters attached to lighting columns must be first fixed to card of adequate stiffness which in turn must be tied with string to the road lighting column. The mounting height of the card must not be less than 2100 mm (7 ft) above the height of the adjoining footway.
8. The area of any poster must not exceed 0.2 sq m, and the maximum overall vertical or horizontal dimension must not exceed 500 mm.
9. Posters, mounts and string must be removed within the 7 days following the election.
10. For statutory reasons the Returning Officer cannot be involved in controlling the erection of election posters. Any questions or problems concerning this policy will be dealt with by the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services.
- 11./

APPENDIX A

11. Except as stated above no permission is given for election posters to be displayed on any Council property.
12. If candidates intend to erect Election Posters adjacent to a Trunk Road, please note that management and maintenance of the Trunk Road Network in Highland is now undertaken by Scotland Transerv Ltd and BEAR Scotland Ltd. The prior permission to erect posters should be sought from the Company's representatives as follows :

North West Scotland – A9 and west
Scotland Transerv Limited,
Broxden House
Broxden Business Park
Perth
PH1 1RA
Tel: 01738 455300
Fax: 01738 455301

North East Scotland – A95 & A96
BEAR Scotland Limited,
North East Primary Depot
Inveralmond Road
PERTH
Perthshire
PH1 3TW
Tel: 01738 448600
Fax: 01738 453175

J. Bruce
Depute Returning Officer,
Highland Council Headquarters,
Inverness

APPENDIX B

Council	Does the council currently allow posters on street furniture?	Valid vote turnout 2012 %
Aberdeen City	No	33.2
Aberdeenshire	No	36.9
Angus	No	38.7
Argyll & Bute	Yes	45.7
Clackmannanshire	No	40.1
Dumfries & Galloway	No	43.4
Dundee	No	35.8
East Ayrshire	No	38.7
East Dunbartonshire	No	45.2
East Lothian	No	43.5
East Renfrewshire	No	48.2
Edinburgh, City of	No	42.1
Eilean Siar	Yes	52.2
Falkirk	No	37.7
Fife	No	37.4
Glasgow	No	31.6
Highland	Yes	41.1
Inverclyde	Yes	42.9
Midlothian	No	40.1
Moray	No	37.3
North Ayrshire	Yes	38.2
North Lanarkshire	Yes	37.2
Orkney Islands	Yes	50.6
Perth & Kinross	No	43.1
Renfrewshire	Yes	41.7
Scottish Borders	No	41.5
Shetland Islands	Yes	54.2
South Ayrshire	No	42.6
South Lanarkshire	Yes	37.5
Stirling	No	43.8
West Dunbartonshire	Yes	40.1
West Lothian	Yes	41.8
Councils that permit posters	12	
Councils that do not permit posters	20	