



Project planner

Scottish Independence Referendum 18 September 2014

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this template project plan is to assist Counting Officers to plan for the Scottish Independence Referendum. The template includes a number of deliverables and tasks, including all of those that must be included in your plan in order for you to meet *performance standards 1 and 2*.
- 1.2 As a requirement to meet these standards, you must prepare a project plan, treat it as a 'living document' and keep it under regular review, using it to monitor progress and to inform the development of your lessons learned report. The plan must include:
- Clearly defined objectives and success measures.
 - Contingency planning and business continuity arrangements.
 - Identification of the required resources.
 - Identification of staffing requirements, including any necessary recruitment arrangements.
 - A training plan which identifies the training needs of permanent and temporary staff.
 - An assessment of the need to outsource, the management of contractors and suppliers if outsourcing is considered appropriate and the development and management of contracts.
 - Identification of suitable venues for all processes.
 - Processes in place to identify any patterns of activity that might indicate potential integrity issues and what steps are to be taken to deal with them.
 - A plan to deliver key referendum processes, including the management of the absent voting process and verification and count arrangements.
 - Public awareness activity.
 - Processes in place to manage potential enquiries from observers and to support their attendance at the referendum processes they are entitled to attend.
 - A plan to evaluate procedures post-referendum and identify lessons learned.
- 1.3 Further guidance on planning for the referendum can be found in [Part B – Planning and organisation](#) of the Chief Counting Officer's guidance for the Scottish Independence Referendum.
- 1.4 In addition, you must carry out a thorough evaluation of all processes outlined in the project plan, seeking feedback from appropriate stakeholders, and produce a lessons learned document which will be used to inform the project plan and risk register for future electoral events.

1.5 Further guidance on the review of procedures can be found in *Part F – After the declaration of results* of the Chief Counting Officer’s guidance for the Scottish Independence Referendum.

2 Objectives and success measures

2.1 Before compiling a detailed list of tasks, the aims of the project need to be established, i.e., what you want to achieve, and what success will look like.

Aims	Tools for measuring success
Run the referendum in accordance with the legislation and performance standards framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Completion of tasks by deadlines</i> • <i>Project Plan and risk register include all the criteria as outlined in Section 1 above</i> • <i>Timely submission of any performance standards returns required by the Chief Counting Officer</i>
Voters receive the information that they need in an accessible format and in time for them to cast their votes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback from voters</i> • <i>Feedback from staff</i> • <i>Feedback from organisations with an interest in the voting process, including disability organisations</i>
Campaigners, campaign organisations and agents can find out how to get involved, what the rules are, how to comply with those rules and will have confidence in the management of the process and the result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback from campaigners</i> • <i>Feedback from permitted participants</i> • <i>Feedback from designated organisations</i> • <i>Feedback from referendum agents</i> • <i>Feedback from postal ballot agents</i> • <i>Feedback from polling agents</i> • <i>Feedback from counting agents</i>
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback from stakeholders</i> • <i>Any records that could be of interest to stakeholders and can be made available, are made available</i> • <i>Clear audit trail</i> • <i>Communications strategy</i>
Professional delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project plan</i> • <i>Risk register</i> • <i>Management structure</i> • <i>Record of project team meetings</i> • <i>Contracts in place for any outsourced work</i> • <i>Contingency arrangements</i>

Aims	Tools for measuring success
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plans</i> • <i>Training schedule and materials</i> • <i>Clear management structures and escalation procedures</i>
Accurate results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear audit trail</i> • <i>Postal vote paperwork</i> • <i>Ballot paper accounts</i> • <i>Verification and count paperwork</i> • <i>Results</i>
Results in which all stakeholders are confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Record of complaints and comments</i> • <i>Feedback from voters, permitted participants and other organisations with an interest in the referendum, including disability organisations</i> • <i>Feedback from referendum agents</i> • <i>Feedback from staff</i> • <i>Feedback from Chief Counting Officer and her staff</i> • <i>Minutes of evaluation/review and other relevant meetings and lessons learned document</i> • <i>Media reporting</i> • <i>No challenges to the results</i>

3 Deliverables and tasks

3.1 Once the aims of the project have been established and objectives identified, individual tasks can be planned for and allocated.

3.2 The plan below identifies a number of deliverables and tasks that should be undertaken, including all of those that must be included in your plan. In addition to the deliverables and tasks identified in the template you should also add in any other deliverables and tasks you identify as necessary, including ones specific to your local circumstances. The plan below highlights in blue tasks required to be undertaken at or by a particular time by the statutory timetable.

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Learn lessons from previous electoral events	<i>Consider processes used at previous electoral events, and feed lessons learned into project planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider outcomes from evaluation of previous electoral events and lessons learned document Consider experiences of other areas at previous electoral events Plan for any amendments identified as necessary as a result of these reviews 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Prepare plans to support the effective delivery of the polls	<i>Identify project aims and objectives, and plan for the tasks that will need to be undertaken to achieve these</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop project plan 					
	<i>Identify and manage risks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop risk register 					
Allocate sufficient resources	<i>Financial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify projected costs • Once you have received notification from the Scottish Government of the referendum budget for your area, reconcile projected costs for activities against the available budget 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Staffing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As you identify staffing requirements, also check intended recruitment processes are robust and comply with all legal requirements (e.g. by seeking advice from your council's HR dept) 					
	<i>Project team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess need to recruit additional support staff Identify staff for all roles Develop contingency plans for unplanned staff absence 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Staffing requirements for specific processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine staffing requirements for specific processes, including polling stations, postal voting and verification and count staff Write to any staff you have used previously and are considering re-appointing, checking availability Appoint staff and send letters of appointment 					
	<i>Support staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify support staff Draw up an escalation procedure for complex enquiries Appoint support staff and dispatch letters of appointment as appropriate 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Provide training to all relevant staff	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure project team is familiar with referendum framework and legislation, and assess training needs • Identify training needs of all other staff • Prepare training schedule • Prepare training sessions • Training of polling station staff • Training of postal vote issuing staff • Training of postal vote opening staff • Training of verification and count staff 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Managing contractors/suppliers	<i>Poll cards/ballot papers/postal ballot packs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess whether you need to outsource through a cost-benefit analysis <p>If outsourcing is decided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a clear specification setting out exactly what is required and by when (see the CCO's contract management checklist) • Start procurement process or choose contractor(s) from the council's list of approved contractors • Develop written contract(s) with legal and/or other expert advice • Make contingency arrangements • Document all stages of the production process, including any variations • Contact Royal Mail 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Identify and book venues	<i>Polling places</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an evaluation of the suitability of polling places • Identify and book polling places • Make contingency arrangements, including preparing a list of alternative venues and an emergency protocol 					
	<i>Postal vote issue and openings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and book venues • Make contingency arrangements, including preparing a list of alternative venues and an emergency protocol • Finalise layout of the premises, taking into account workflows and IT and security requirements 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Verification and count</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and book venue • Make contingency arrangements, including considering alternative venues and preparing emergency protocols • Finalise layout of the premises 					
Appropriate allocation of electors to polling stations	<i>Managing polling stations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate electors to polling stations (taking into account any direction or guidance by the CCO) 					
Identification of potential integrity issues	<i>Maintain a good working relationship with local police Single Point Of Contact (SPOC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with SPOC • Schedule regular communications • Review previous security arrangements and identify any risks • Make arrangements for police presence at polling stations, verification and the count 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Security of ballot boxes and ballot papers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for secure storage, including if there is a break in proceedings • Set up a system to ensure that ballot papers cannot be interfered with during production and once they are 'live' 					
Encourage participation	<i>Raise awareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the effective delivery of information • Make contact with your council's communications team and seek their input • Ensure all outgoing communications provide appropriate contact details so anyone can respond and obtain further information • Send press releases to local media to raise awareness • Update and maintain web pages with information on the referendum and statutory notices 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
<p>Ensure all necessary equipment and stationery is in place to conduct the poll</p>	<p><i>Stationery/ equipment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare checklist of all stationery/equipment to be used • Check general stock levels and conduct equipment audit • Liaise with your council on provision of ballot boxes, fittings and compartments • Test equipment, including equipment to be used for postal vote identifier verification • Prepare ballot boxes and other polling station equipment and forms for collection/delivery 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Ensure all official documents are in place	<i>Poll cards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for proof-checking of poll cards • Send data to printers (ensuring system is in place to send updates after registration/absent voting deadlines) • Sign-off proofs • First dispatch of poll cards between 14 and 15 August as directed by CCO 			14-15 August		
	<i>Ballot papers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballot papers prepared in accordance with legislation and CCO directions • Order 120% of ballot papers to comply with CCO direction • Ensure printer is aware of direction to use different official marks for polling station votes and postals • Arrange proof-checking of ballot papers 					

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despatch data to printers • Sign-off proofs • Give print-run estimate • Confirm final print-run • Print ballot papers and carry out spot-checks 					
	<i>Postal ballot packs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange proof-checking of postal vote stationery • Send data to printers • Sign-off proofs • Start printing (having established systems to communicate data updates for late applications), and carry out spot-checks • Print enough postal ballot packs to be able to issue replacements as required • Ensure postal ballots have correct official mark 					

Deliverables	<i>Subject / Sub-deliverables</i>	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Notices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide where notice of referendum is to be displayed • Prepare notice in accordance with prescribed form • Publish notice locally, including on council website, on Wednesday 13 August as per CCO direction 			Wed 13 Aug		

Deliverables	<i>Subject / Sub-deliverables</i>	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
	<i>Polling lists and absent voters' lists</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print polling lists for all polling stations, plus postal and proxy lists • Liaise with the ERO to develop process for communicating alterations to the polling list and any emergency proxy applications that are granted on referendum day 					
Manage potential enquiries from observers	<i>Access to information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information for observers on the location and timing of the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers, the poll and the counting of the votes 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Publish notice of referendum and notice of situation of polling stations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print, display and upload to website 			In accordance with CCO direction		By Wednesday 13 August
Deadline for notification of appointment of referendum agents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print, display and upload to website notice of appointment of referendum agents 			25 working days before referendum day (noon)		Deadline for receipt is before noon on Thursday 14 August Deadline for notice of appointment is from noon on Thursday 14 August
Registration deadline (Note that cut-off date for registration is the twelfth date before the poll)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain new registration details from the ERO as soon as these can be made available after the registration deadline 			12 working days before poll		Midnight on Tuesday 2 September
Deadline for applications for new postal votes and for amendments to existing postal and proxy voting arrangements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send updates to printers 			11 working days before poll		Before 5pm on Wednesday 3 September

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Manage the absent voting process	<i>Postal vote issuing process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue first postal ballot packs between 26 and 28 August as directed by CCO • Carry out further issues as circumstances demand • Implement procedures for superseded votes as necessary • Implement cancellation procedures as necessary 			26-28 August		
	<i>Opening sessions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm number and timing of opening sessions • Inform referendum agents of opening sessions, giving at least 48 hours' notice • First opening of postal votes and subsequent opening sessions • Final opening of postal votes, and completion of matching 					

Deliverables	Subject / Sub-deliverables	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for emergencies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out proxy poll cards as appropriate 			11 working days before poll		Before 5pm on Wednesday 3 September
EROs publish notice of alteration to the polling list		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue poll cards and postal votes to those included in this alteration as soon as possible thereafter 			5 working days before poll		By Thursday 11 September
Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide secrecy requirements 			5 working days before poll		By Thursday 11 September
First day for issue of replacement lost postal votes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue replacements as required 			4 working days before poll		Friday 12 September
Deadline for applying for an emergency proxy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate member(s) of staff to liaise with ERO to communicate decisions on emergency proxies 			Referendum day (5pm)		Thursday 18 September
Deadline for replacement of spoilt or lost postal votes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure no more replacement postal votes are issued after this time 			Referendum day (5pm)		Thursday 18 September

Deliverables	<i>Subject / Sub-deliverables</i>	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
Manage the verification and count arrangements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information for attendees on the processes to be followed • Prepare paperwork and equipment for count • Test communication procedures • Implement walkthrough of systems • Arrange for last opening of postal votes at Count • Implement procedures for verification and count • Implement reporting procedures to CCO 					

Deliverables	<i>Subject / Sub-deliverables</i>	Tasks	Lead officer	Start (by not later than)	To be completed by	Done (v)	Comments
After the declaration of result		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display/publish results • Arrange for collection of equipment to be removed • Seal and send referendum materials to the Proper Officer of the council • Pay fees to all staff • Meet with stakeholders to obtain feedback • Carry out thorough evaluation of all processes in the project plan and produce a lessons learned document • Complete and submit data returns • Account for the referendum including payment of creditors • Destroy polling lists and other registration documents 					

4 Dependencies and contact details

The delivery of the referendum is dependent on the following internal and external service providers:

	Department/ Service/ Company/	Contact name	Phone number	Email address
Internal service providers	<i>E.g. IT support team, Print services, HR...</i>			
External service providers	<i>E.g. software supplier, hardware supplier, printers, specialist stationery suppliers, Royal Mail...</i>			

5 Evaluation

5.1 This template can be used to inform the evaluation of the referendum or, if you have not yet reviewed your last electoral event, to inform that review. It can also be used to inform the development of a lessons learned report. It should be adapted to ensure that it reflects the main deliverables and tasks and assesses whether the stated objectives have been met. The outcome of this evaluation can then be used to inform the planning for the next electoral event. *Part F – After the declaration of results* of the CCO’s guidance contains advice on reviewing the referendum, seeking feedback from appropriate stakeholders and what to include in a lessons learned report.

	What worked well	Objectives met?	Issues to be addressed	Key recommendations	To be completed by (date)	Responsible officer
Project planning <i>E.g. timeliness of delivery, adequacy of task allocation</i>						
Adequacy of polling places/stations <i>E.g. in relation to location/accessibility/size, response to any concerns arising from evaluation of suitability of polling stations</i>						
Equipment and stationery <i>E.g. stock levels</i>						
Printers <i>E.g. quality, timescales, price, communication</i>						

	What worked well	Objectives met?	Issues to be addressed	Key recommendations	To be completed by (date)	Responsible officer
Software performance <i>E.g. performance of software, identification of any changes required to ease processing, supplier's response to any issues</i>						
Management of contractors <i>E.g. performance of contractors: communication, effectiveness of contracts, value for money</i>						
Recruitment and training (temporary and permanent) <i>E.g. was the training effective, were the staff efficient?</i>						
Processing/handling of queries <i>E.g. adequacy of FAQs, complaints recording process</i>						
Resources <i>E.g. staffing levels, availability of resources</i>						
Security/integrity <i>E.g. any problems that arose, comments/feedback from SPOC</i>						

	What worked well	Objectives met?	Issues to be addressed	Key recommendations	To be completed by (date)	Responsible officer
Verification and count arrangements <i>E.g. suitability of venue and layout</i>						
Postal voting <i>E.g. did all those who requested a postal vote receive one, any issues surrounding verification of personal identifiers</i>						
Communication <i>E.g. methods used for communicating information about the referendum and the voting process, did voters understand the process?</i>						
Summary of feedback <i>E.g. feedback received from voters and other stakeholders, including verbal feedback or through a structured survey</i>						

Findings of the review

Aims	Tools for measuring success	Achieved (✓)	Comments/ supporting evidence
Run the referendum in accordance with the legislation and the CCO's performance standards framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Completion of tasks by deadlines</i> • <i>Project Plan and risk register include all necessary criteria</i> • <i>Timely submission of any performance standards returns to the CCO</i> 		
A good experience for all voters, with anybody who is entitled to vote able to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback from voters</i> • <i>Feedback from staff</i> • <i>Feedback from organisations with an interest in the voting process, including disability organisations</i> • <i>Feedback from referendum agents</i> 		
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feedback from stakeholders</i> • <i>Any records that could be of interest to stakeholders and can be made available, are made available</i> • <i>Clear audit trail</i> • <i>Communications strategy</i> 		

Aims	<i>Tools for measuring success</i>	Achieved (✓)	Comments/ supporting evidence
Professional delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project plan</i> • <i>Risk register</i> • <i>Management structure</i> • <i>Record of project team meetings</i> • <i>Contracts in place for any outsourced work</i> • <i>Contingency arrangements</i> 		
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plans</i> • <i>Training schedule and materials</i> • <i>Clear management structures and escalation procedures</i> 		
Accurate results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear audit trail</i> • <i>Postal vote paperwork</i> • <i>Ballot paper accounts</i> • <i>Verification and count paperwork</i> • <i>Results</i> 		

Aims	<i>Tools for measuring success</i>	<i>Achieved (✓)</i>	<i>Comments/ supporting evidence</i>
Results in which all stakeholders are confident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Record of complaints</i> • <i>Feedback from voters, campaigners and campaign organisations and agents and other organisations with an interest in the referendum, including disability organisations</i> • <i>Feedback from staff</i> • <i>Feedback from the Chief Counting Officer and her staff</i> • <i>Minutes of evaluation/review and other relevant meetings and lessons learned document</i> • <i>No negative media reporting</i> • <i>No challenges to the results</i> 		