SCOTTISH STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 254

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

The Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2026

Made - - - -	*2nd September 2026*
Laid before the Scottish Parliament	*4th September 2026*
Coming into force - -	*13th November 2026*

The Scottish Ministers make the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 3(1) and (3A) and 16(2) of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004(**a**) and all other powers enabling them to do so.

In accordance with section 7(1) and (2)(j) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000(**b**), they have consulted the Electoral Commission.

Citation, commencement and transitional provision

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Scottish Local Government Elections Amendment Order 2026 and comes into force on 13 November 2026.

(2) This Order has no effect for the purposes of any election for which the date of poll is on or before 5 May 2027.

Amendment of the Scottish local government election rules

2. Schedule 1 of the Scottish Local Government Elections Order 2011(**c**) (rules for conduct of a Scottish local government election where the poll is not taken together with the poll at another election) is amended in accordance with articles 3 to 6.

Nomination of candidates

3. After rule 4(11)(**d**) (nomination of candidates) insert—

"(11A) Paragraph (11B) apples where—

(a) the candidate has not made and signed a statement for the purposes of paragraph (11)(a), or

(**a**) 2004 asp 9. Section 3 was relevantly amended by section 34(6) of the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006 (asp 14) and section 45(2) of the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Act 2025 (asp 4).

(**b**) 2000 c. 41. Section 7(2)(j) was inserted by section 12 of the Local Electoral Administration (Scotland) Act 2011 (asp 10).

(**c**) S.S.I. 2011/399; relevantly amended by S.S.I. 2020/239 and the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Act 2025 (asp 4).

(**d**) Paragraph (11) of rule 4 was inserted by S.S.I. 2020/239.

(b) the candidate has made and signed a statement for the purposes of that paragraph and their home address is not in Scotland.

(11B) Where this paragraph applies, the home address form must contain a correspondence address within Scotland.".

Format of candidates' names

4. In rule 14(**a**) (the ballot papers), in paragraph (2)(a) after "surnames", insert ", with each candidate's surname appearing first, followed by their forename, with the surname and forename separated by a comma".

Additional information on polling cards

5. In rule 24 (issue of official poll cards and notifications), after paragraph (4), insert—

"(4A) The official poll card, the official postal poll card, the official poll card issued to the proxy of an elector and the official postal poll card issued to the proxy of an elector may, in addition to the matters in the relevant form, set out such other information, not relating to any candidate or registered party, as the returning officer considers appropriate, and different additional information may be provided to different electors or descriptions of elector.".

Equipment of polling stations

6.—(1) in rule 25 (equipment of polling stations)—

(a) for paragraph (5)(b) substitute—

"(b) such equipment as it is reasonable to provide for the purposes of enabling, or making it easier for, relevant persons to vote independently in the manner directed by rule 33 (including in relation to voting secretly).",

(b) after paragraph (5), insert—

"(5A) For the purposes of paragraph (5)(b), "relevant persons" means persons who find it difficult or impossible to vote in the manner directed by rule 33 because of—

(a) blindness or partial sight, or

(b) another disability.

(5B) The Electoral Commission must give guidance to returning officers in relation to the duty imposed by paragraph (5)(b).

(5C) Before giving guidance under paragraph (5B), the Electoral Commission must consult such persons, including bodies representing the interests of relevant persons, as they consider appropriate.

(5D) In performing the duty imposed by paragraph (5)(b), a returning officer must have regard to guidance given under paragraph (5B).

(5E) Paragraph (5F) applies where, before the coming into force of paragraphs (5B) and (5C), the Electoral Commission has—

(a) issued guidance for the purposes of rule 38(4B) of schedule 2 (Scottish parliamentary election rules) of the Scottish Parliament (Elections etc.) Order 2015(**b**), and

(**a**) Paragraph (2)(a) of rule 14 was amended by S.S.I. 2020/239.
(**b**) S.S.I. 2015/425. Rule 38(4B) was inserted by S.S.I. 2025/313.

(b) consulted on that guidance in accordance with rule 38(4C)(**a**) of that schedule.

(5F) Where this paragraph applies, guidance mentioned in paragraph (5E)(a) is treated as guidance issued under paragraph (5B) which complies with paragraph (5C).".

Forms

7. In Part VII(**b**) (forms for use at Scottish local government elections), for the following forms substitute the corresponding forms set out in the schedule of this Order—

(a) Form 2 (Nomination Paper),

(b) Form 4 (Ballot Paper).

JAMIE HEPBURN
Authorised to sign by the Scottish Ministers

St Andrew's House,
Edinburgh
2nd September 2026

(**a**) Rule 38(4C) was inserted by S.S.I. 2015/313.
(**b**) Part VII of schedule 1 was relevantly amended by S.S.I. 2020/239.

SCHEDULE *Article 7*

Amended forms for use at Scottish local government elections

1. Form 2—

Form 2 (Rule 4)

NOMINATION PAPER
ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS
for the
(Name) Electoral Ward
of (Name) Council
Day of Election: (insert day and date)

I, the undersigned, am hereby nominated as a candidate at the said election.

Candidate's surname
Other names in full
Commonly used surname (in terms of rule 4(3)) (if any)
Commonly used forenames (in terms of rule 4(3)) (if any)
Description (in terms of rule 4(6) to (9)) (if any)

I, the nominee for election, consent to being nominated as a candidate for the (name) electoral ward of (name) Council.

I declare that I am qualified to be elected; that I have attained the age of 18 years and am a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Irish Republic or a qualifying foreign national; that I am not subject to any legal incapacity; and that in terms of Section 29 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:—

*(a) I am registered as a local government elector for the (Name of Council) local government area as in the register of electors and my electoral number is (see note 5).

*(b) I have during the whole of the twelve months preceding the day of nomination occupied as owner or tenant land or premises in the area named above.

*(c) I have during the twelve months preceding the day of my nomination had my principal or only place of work in the area named above.

*(d) I have during the whole of the twelve months preceding my nomination resided in the area named above.

*Delete where inapplicable

I declare that

(a) I am not disqualified from being nominated as a candidate for election as a local government councillor by reason of any of the disqualifications in Section 31 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973(**a**), a copy of which is printed overleaf;

(**a**) 1973 c. 65.

(b) I am not disqualified for election by reason of holding a politically restricted post in terms of Section 1(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989(**a**), under a local authority within the meaning of Part 1 of that Act;

(c) I am not disqualified from being nominated as a candidate for election as a local government councillor by reason of any sanction imposed by the Standards Commission for Scotland in terms of section 19(1)(d) of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000(**b**).

Signature of Candidate
Date
Signature of Witness
Name of witness
Date

Note 1 The attention of candidates and local government electors is drawn to the rules for filling up nomination papers and other provisions relating to the nominations in the local government elections rules contained in Schedule 1 of the Scottish Local Government Elections Order 2011.

Note 2 Where a candidate is commonly known by some title, the candidate may be described by the title as if it were the candidate's surname.

Note 3 If a candidate's nomination paper gives a commonly used surname or forename in addition to or instead of another name the nomination paper may state the commonly used forename or surname in addition to or instead of the other name.

Note 4 But in terms of rule 14(7) and (8) the ballot paper will not show the other name if the returning officer thinks—

(a) that the use of the commonly used name is likely to mislead or confuse electors; or
(b) that the commonly used name is obscene or offensive.

Note 5 A person's electoral number consists of the distinctive letter or letters (or number or numbers) of the polling district in which the candidate is registered together with the number in the register to be used at the election, except that before publication of the register the distinctive letter or letters (or number or numbers) of the polling district in which the candidate is entitled to be registered together with the number (if any) in the electors lists for that register shall be used instead.

Back of nomination paper

(Here, print a copy of section 31 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, section 1(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and section 19 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.)

(a) 1989 c. 42.
(b) 2000 asp 7.

2. Form 4—

Form 4 Rule 14(2)

BALLOT PAPER
Front of ballot paper

(NAME OF COUNCIL) - (NAME OF WARD)

(Number of candidates) 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.**

ANDERSON, Hans (address in [*relevant area or country*]) **Rowan Party**	☆	☐
CRANSTON, Helen 912 Main Street, Anytown **Beech Party**	☆	☐
FLEMING, Douglas Martin 112 South Street, Anytown **Independent**		☐
HAMILTON, Flora (address in [*relevant area or country*]) **Willow Party**	☆	☐
KUMAR, Kuldip (address in [*relevant area or country*]) **Elm Party**	☆	☐
MACDONALD, Donald Alexander 4 Elgin Ave, Anytown **Oak Party**	☆	☐
MACKENZIE, Robert William Sutherland (address in [*relevant area or country*]) **Independent**		☐
MASTERS, Susan Caroline 93 Holyrood Road, Anytown **Sycamore Party**	☆	☐

Back of Ballot Paper

Number and unique identifying mark

Election for the (insert name) Ward of (insert council name) on ……..20

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order amends the Scottish Local Government Elections Order 2011 ("the 2011 Order").

Article 3 amends rule 4 of the Scottish local government elections rules (set out in schedule 1 of the 2011 Order) to require candidates who have not requested publication of their home address, and candidates who have requested publication of their home address but whose home address is outside Scotland, to provide a correspondence address in Scotland in their nomination paper. That address will be used and published only if the candidate becomes their own election agent by default.

Article 4 amends rule 14 of the Scottish local government elections rules to require that on the ballot paper the candidate's surname appears first, followed by their forename, and that the candidate's surname and forename are separated by a comma.

Article 5 amends rule 24 of the Scottish local government elections rules to make clear returning officers may add such information as they consider appropriate on polling cards.

Article 6 amends rule 25 of the Scottish local government elections rules to substitute the existing requirement that returning officers provide a specified device to allow blind and partially sighted voters to vote without assistance, with a duty to provide such equipment as is reasonable to enable (or make it easier for) disabled voters, including those who are blind or partially sighted, to vote independently in the manner directed by rule 33 (including in relation to voting secretly). It also requires the Electoral Commission to produce guidance on this duty, and requires returning officers to have regard to that guidance in fulling the duty to provide equipment to assist disabled voters.

Article 7 updates forms 2 and 4 in the 2011 Order. Form 2 is changed in consequence of the change to local government candidacy rights by section 2 of the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Act 2025. Form 4 is changed due to the introduction of a standard format in which candidates' names must appear on ballot papers by article 3.

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