

How the Single Transferable Vote (STV) works

Local Government elections are conducted under the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system. This means you should rank the candidates in order of your preference.

Electors are advised to vote using numbers as follows:

Instead of using a cross, number the candidates in the order of your choice.

Put the number 1 in the box next to the name of the candidate who is your first choice, 2 in the box next to your second choice, 3 in the box next to your third choice and so on. You can make as many choices as you wish.

How does a candidate get elected at an election?

Under the STV voting system a candidate requires a certain minimum number of votes to be elected. This minimum number is called the quota. The first step is to count the number of valid votes and then calculate the quota required by a candidate to be elected.

The formula for the quota is:

(Valid votes cast) divided by (seats to be filled +1) + 1 vote

In this example there is one seat to fill, so the quota will be:

(Valid votes cast) divided by (1+1) + 1 vote

This means that the winning candidate therefore needs to receive 50% plus 1 of the total valid votes cast.

Although the count will be conducted electronically the process is the same:

The first preferences, the 1s marked on each ballot paper, are counted

If a candidate gets enough 1s to reach or exceed the quota they are elected

If a candidate is elected at the first stage that candidate's votes are then transferred at a reduced value (the surplus divided by the total votes received)

If no-one reaches or exceeds the quota the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded from the contest and their votes transferred

These votes are transferred to the other candidates based on the next available preference marked on the ballot paper. When using votes from a Candidate who has been eliminated, these votes carry their full value of 1

If no-one reaches or exceeds the quota the count continues by eliminating the next Candidate who has the least number of votes

The count progresses through as many stages as are required until a candidate reaches or exceeds the quota

If only two Candidates are remaining then the Candidate having the most votes at that stage will be declared to be elected (even though they may not have reached the quota)