

**Scottish Environment LINK**  
**Briefing on the Scottish Local Elections results 2012**

This report is based on the quick analyses and data published on the BBC and a variety of independent websites. Figures given are not in any way final but subject to correction as academic result figures are produced over the coming months.

**Turnout**

The turn-out was approximately 40%. This is well down on the Scottish Parliament elections of 2011 and the Westminster elections of 2010, but these figures are not readily comparable because of the voter's interest in the different levels of government varying. The 2012 turnout figure is roughly comparable to pre-1999 local government elections in Scotland. The turnout figures are, in effect though, the start of a new line of data as the local elections 2012 were held independent of Holyrood elections for the first time since 1999, so the comparison of turnout with the last Council elections in 2007 suffers from distortion (especially if the difficulties of introducing two new electoral systems in 2007 is considered also).

**Council Control and Councillor Numbers**

There are elections in all 32 Scottish councils in 2012. Results are expected on 4 May.  
 Councils and Councillors

Party	Councils		Councillors	
	Total	+/-	Total	+/-
Scottish National Party	2	+2	424	+57
Labour	4	+2	394	+58
Conservative	0	0	115	-16
Liberal Democrat	0	0	71	-80
Green	0	0	14	+6
Scottish Socialist Party	0	0	1	0
Independent	3	0	0	0
British National Party	0	0	0	0
Independent Community and Health Concern	0	0	0	0
Liberal	0	0	0	-1
Residents Association	0	0	0	0
Respect	0	0	0	0
Socialist	0	0	0	0
UK Independence Party	0	0	0	-1
Others	0	0	201	-22
No Overall Control	23	-4		

Aberdeen NOC No Change  
 Aberdeenshire NOC No Change  
 Angus SNP gain from NOC  
 Argyll & Bute NOC No Change  
 Clackmannanshire NOC No Change  
 Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar IND No Change

Dumfries & Galloway NOC No Change  
Dundee SNP gain from NOC  
East Ayrshire NOC No Change  
East Dunbartonshire NOC No Change  
East Lothian NOC No Change  
East Renfrewshire NOC No Change  
Edinburgh NOC No Change  
Falkirk NOC No Change  
Fife NOC No Change  
Glasgow LAB gain from NOC  
Highland NOC No Change  
Inverclyde NOC No Change  
Midlothian LAB lose to NOC  
Moray NOC No Change  
North Ayrshire NOC No Change  
North Lanarkshire LAB No Change  
Orkney IND No Change  
Perth & Kinross NOC No Change  
Renfrewshire LAB gain from NOC  
Scottish Borders NOC No Change  
Shetland IND No Change  
South Lanarkshire NOC No Change  
Stirling NOC No Change  
West Dunbartonshire LAB gain from NOC  
West Lothian NOC No Change

Full details for each Council can be obtained from

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/vote2012/council/scotland.stm> - Please note that the BBC figures provide only a very raw analysis of what changes happened. For example in Glasgow the raw figures (and even more, the media headlines) provide only the barest of explanations. See <http://www.gerryhassan.com/blog/the-story-the-media-should-have-told-you-about-glasgow/>

### **What happens now? - Negotiations for Control.**

In four of the 32 Councils, there are majority administrations (LAB: Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. SNP: Dundee and Angus) and the appropriate party leadership will sort out the administration. In all the other councils, with or without significant numbers of Independent Councillors, it is probable that negotiations will proceed to form coalition administrations. For example, the SNP and a single Independent have already agreed to form a majority administration in Midlothian (dependent on the casting vote of the Provost).

In policy terms, LINK's manifesto, Acting Locally, may have had an effect in upping the environment's profile during the elections and in the various manifestos published by the parties at both national and local level. No systematic analysis has been possible, however, and on the small amount of evidence available, it is fairly certain that the standard of the delivery of environmental policy will remain much as it was.

## Party Positions

Parties	First-Preference Votes	Votes %	+/- A	Councillors A	Net Gain/Loss A	2011 Const. Vote B	2011 List Vote B
<a href="#">SNP</a>	502,201	32.32%	+4.46%	424	+61	45.39%	44%
<a href="#">Labour</a>	487,884	31.39%	+3.24%	394	+46	31.69%	26.3%
<a href="#">Conservative</a>	206,856	13.31%	-2.26%	115	-28	13.91%	12.4%
<a href="#">Liberal Democrats</a>	102,399	6.59%	-6.10%	71	-95	7.93%	5.2%
<a href="#">Green</a>	34,252	2.20%	+0.16%	14	+6	-	4.38%
<a href="#">Independent</a>	184,329	11.86%	+0.98%	194	+2	1.1%	-
Other	36,055	2.32%	+0.9%	11	+1	1.1%	7.72%
<b>Total</b>				<b>1,223</b>			

Because the difficulties of comparing data from elections is great, the parties have “spun” the results as best they can and the media have reported with headline analysis based on their own resources. Two patterns of explanation emerge with some, limited credibility.

The columns above marked **A**, based upon comparison with the Council elections in 2007, suggest that Labour and the SNP both did very well, gaining Councils, Councillors and vote share – with all other parties sliding back and the Liberal Democrats doing worst of all.

The columns marked **B** above suggest a variant picture, however, as they are based on the first preference votes in 2011 and 2012. This suggests that the SNP in fact lost a large proportion of their vote, that Labour, the Conservatives and the Lib Dems all remained relatively static and that the variation is accounted for by the differential coverage of candidates by the Greens and Independents.

### Political consequences of the results.

A general perception in the media has been that the SNP’s progress has been slowed if not halted. On the basis of these results the party of Government at Holyrood made a huge breakthrough in 2011 – but that this advance did not extend to the local councils, despite gains. Winning Scottish independence at a Referendum in 2014 still looks like a very tough ambition for the SNP.

### Across the UK

Elections also happened in much of England and almost all of Wales. In these elections the Labour share of the vote rose significantly from the previous election AND from the 2010 election results. Labour saw significant gains in numbers of Councils controlled and Councillors elected. The Conservatives fell back (although they clung on to the Mayor of London) and the Liberal Democrats fell back, but with a share of the vote only marginally different to that of comparable 2011 local elections in England. For full results see:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17270000>

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