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THE SCOTTISH OFFICE



Constitution Group

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To Chief Executives
Of Scottish Local Authorities

28 July 1997

Dear Chief Executive

REFERENDUM: 11 SEPTEMBER 1997:
SCOTLAND'S PARLIAMENT: PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO VOTERS

I am writing to ask for your co-operation in distributing information on the Government's proposals for a Scottish Parliament.

The Scottish Office has already consulted COSLA, who share Ministers' hopes that Councils will offer their full co-operation in this exercise.

You will know that the White Paper "Scotland's Parliament", setting out the Government's proposals was published on Thursday 24 July. The proposals will form the basis on which people in Scotland will be given the opportunity to express their views on 11 September.

To ensure that the electorate are fully informed of the main points in the Government's proposals, a summary leaflet will be distributed to all households in Scotland towards the end of August. The leaflet will be a factual summary of the key points in The White Paper. It will not attempt to persuade people to vote in favour of the proposals.

It would be helpful if you could arrange for a number of these leaflets to be placed in libraries, community centres, Council offices and other places where the Council meets the public, where they might be made freely available. A number of leaflets will be sent to each Council in the week beginning 18 August.

We also plan to produce leaflets in Gaelic as well as in each of the 5 main ethnic languages - Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati and Cantonese, and to send these to Councils. We would be grateful if your Council would make arrangements for their distribution in the most appropriate way for your area. Perhaps you could let me know how many you would like.

We are in touch with the Scottish Braille Press, who will prepare Braille versions of the leaflets for all Braille readers in Scotland. They will also produce audio tape versions for distribution to all registered blind and partly sighted people in Scotland. Scottish Braille Press have already been in touch with some local authority social services departments, asking for their help with the distribution of these tapes, as social services hold details of people on the register in their area. It would be helpful if social services departments could be encouraged fully to co-operate in this exercise. It is most important that as many people as possible are given access to the Government's proposals in advance of the referendum. Each audio tape and Braille version will be packaged : each only requiring an address label. We would be grateful therefore if you could ascertain and advise the Scottish Braille Press, Craigmillar park, Edinburgh EH16 5NB, the likely total number of audio and Braille versions you would require for blind and partially sighted people on your register eligible to vote and also to whom these should be forwarded when available.

Finally, we are looking at options for the possible production and distribution of a free video, which would summarise the Government's proposals. We would propose to send a number of videos to each local authority, for distribution to community centres, residential homes etc., (where people gather to watch videos) and to libraries for free distribution. (We are looking at the possibility of making available stands on which videos and summary leaflets might be displayed.) I would be grateful to know how many videos your authority would like.

We are working to an extremely tight timetable on these arrangements. To assist our planning, it would therefore be helpful if I could have your response by **1 August**.

I am copying this letter to Douglas Sinclair, COSLA, and Alex Tuff, Scottish Braille Press.

Yours Sincerely



MRS C A MCCRACKEN



RD

Best for Scotland

SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY

N D E P E N D E N C E N E U R O P E

Mr Neil McIntosh CBE
Chief Counting Officer for Scotland
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With regard to the invitation you extended to Sean Connery to attend the central count on 11 September at 10.00pm in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre he has asked me to pass on his thanks but he is unable to attend.

Michael W Russell
Chief Executive

8 September 1997
MWR/IW