

28 December 2011

Reform Scotland bulletin on 'Devo Plus' and opinion poll

On 13 September Reform Scotland published [Devolution Plus](#), which set out our proposal for Scotland's constitutional future. The proposal was based on the principle that each layer of government should be responsible for what it spends. As a result, we came up with a model that saw the majority of revenue powers transferred to Holyrood, leaving Westminster primarily with VAT and National Insurance. With many areas associated with alleviating poverty devolved to Holyrood, Devolution Plus also set out proposals to transfer additional powers over social protection to enable a more coherent and effective approach to this policy area.

Tables 1 and 2 below outline how Reform Scotland's proposed model would help ensure that the Scottish Parliament was responsible for raising what it spent:

Table 1: Income and expenditure in Scotland summary 2009/10 – Current regime

£million	Income	% of total	Expenditure	% of total
Westminster (inc geographic share of oil)	44,349	75.0%	24,144	40.80%
Scotland (Holyrood & Local authorities)	3,783	6.4%	35,026	59.19%
Total Scotland	48,132		59,170	
Funding of Deficit by UK borrowing	11,038	18.6%		
Total Scotland funding and expenditure	59,170	100.0%	59,170	100.0%

Table 2: Income and expenditure Scotland summary 2009/10 - Devolution Plus

£million	Income	% of total	Expenditure	% of total
Westminster (inc geographic share of oil)	17,201	29.0%	16,929	28.6%
Scotland (Holyrood & Local authorities)	30,931	52.3%	42,241	71.4%
Total Scotland income and expenditure	48,132		59,170	
Funding of Deficit by UK borrowing	11,656	19.7%		
Funding of Deficit by Scottish borrowing	-618	-1.0%		
Total Scotland funding and expenditure	59,170	100.0%	59,170	100.0%

Following our publication, Reform Scotland undertook an online opinion poll asking respondents' views on the proposed referendum, Devolution Plus and the principle of raising what you spend. We do not claim that this poll is totally scientific as it was self selecting. However, the responses, particularly those broken down by party affiliation, are very interesting, in particular:

- A clear overall majority in each of the party groupings believes that the Scottish Parliament should be responsible for raising the majority of the money it spends.
- However, there is not the same enthusiasm for the same principle in relation to local government with councils being responsible for

raising their own income, with only the Conservatives and Lib Dems, as well as the 'other' grouping, having an outright majority in favour.

- There was some enthusiasm across all party groups for a transfer of some additional welfare powers.

Commenting on the 'devo plus' and the findings of the survey, Reform Scotland's chairman Ben Thomson said:

"From a number of surveys and polls it is becoming increasingly obvious that the general public want a greater ability for Holyrood to raise revenues to better match its spending responsibility whilst at the same time many still value the relationship with the rest of the UK. Reform Scotland's proposal, Devo Plus, sets out in detail how revenues could be raised both by Westminster and Holyrood for both levels of Government to fund their costs within the current constitutional framework of devolution. This would give real incentives for politicians at both levels of government to be more accountable for the money they spend"

"Whilst Reform Scotland accepts that this survey is not scientific it does present some interesting findings which we hope will stimulate debate on the constitutional future of Scotland."

The Figures

The questions and the results have been reproduced below. 854 people completed the survey. To try and display the figures in a more balanced manner the responses to each of the questions has been broken down by party affiliation. As 43 individuals chose to skip this question, the total for the results shown is 811.

1. If there was a Scottish independence referendum tomorrow where you could only vote either yes or no to independence, how would you vote								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Yes	97.5%	28.0%	9.2%	25.0%	54.5%	65.2%	33.7%	66.13%
	425	23	8	11	18	15	35	535
No	1.6%	67.1%	87.4%	61.4%	27.3%	34.8%	58.7%	30.04%
	7	55	76	27	9	8	61	243
Don't Know	0.9%	4.9%	3.4%	13.6%	18.2%	0.0%	7.7%	3.83%
	4	4	3	6	6	0	8	31
Answered question	436	82	87	44	33	23	104	809
skipped question								2

2. What is your preferred option for Scotland's political future?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Independence	93.3%	22.0%	8.0%	17.8%	54.5%	60.9%	27.9%	61.76%
	405	18	7	8	18	14	29	499
A transfer of more	6.5%	57.3%	42.5%	60.0%	42.4%	8.7%	40.4%	24.38%

financial and spending powers	28	47	37	27	14	2	42	197
	0.2%	18.3%	20.7%	11.1%	3.0%	13.0%	18.3%	7.67%
Status quo	1	15	18	5	1	3	19	62
Scrap the Scottish Parliament	0.0%	2.4%	28.7%	11.1%	0.0%	17.4%	13.5%	6.19%
	0	2	25	5	0	4	14	50
Answered question	434	82	87	45	33	23	104	808
skipped question								3

3. Do you think the Scottish Parliament should be responsible for raising the majority of the money it spends?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Yes	98.4%	69.5%	62.1%	86.7%	97.0%	73.9%	67.3%	86.17%
	429	57	54	39	32	17	70	698
No	90.0%	22.0%	32.2%	6.7%	3.0%	21.7%	29.8%	11.11%
	4	18	28	3	1	5	31	90
Don't Know	0.7%	8.5%	5.7%	6.7%	0.0%	4.3%	2.9%	2.72%
	3	7	5	3	0	1	3	22
Answered question	436	82	87	45	33	23	104	810
skipped question								1

4. Do you think Scottish local authorities should be responsible for raising the majority of the money they spend?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Yes	47.5%	41.5%	51.2%	71.1%	45.5%	56.5%	43.7%	48.27%
	207	34	44	32	15	13	45	390
No	37.8%	43.9%	41.9%	24.4%	39.4%	34.8%	51.5%	39.85%
	165	36	36	11	13	8	53	322
Don't Know	14.7%	14.6%	7.0%	4.4%	15.2%	8.7%	4.9%	11.88%
	64	12	6	2	5	2	5	96
Answered question	436	82	86	45	33	23	103	808
skipped question								3

5. Reform Scotland has suggested that large elements of welfare provision, including job seekers allowance, child benefit and tax credits, should be devolved to the Scottish parliament, with state pensions and some other benefits such as maternity pay and statutory sick pay remaining at Westminster. Do you think this is								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Very good idea	38.8%	19.5%	6.9%	13.3%	33.3%	18.2%	9.7%	26.10%
	165	16	6	6	1	4	10	208
Good idea	23.8%	31.7%	26.4%	35.6%	33.3%	31.8%	28.2%	26.73%
	101	26	23	16	11	7	29	213
unsure	16.7%	30.5%	23.0%	31.1%	21.2%	9.1%	28.2%	21.08%
	71	25	20	14	7	2	29	168
Bad idea	11.5%	13.4%	20.7%	8.9%	12.1%	13.6%	17.5%	13.43%

8. Reform Scotland and others have argued that a referendum on independence should also include an option where Scotland remains part of the UK but where increased spending and tax powers are devolved to the Scottish Parliament. What should that option be called?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Devolution Plus	18.2%	35.8%	24.4%	26.7%	21.2%	4.5%	16.5%	20.65%
	77	29	21	12	7	1	17	164
Devolution Max	17.2%	9.9%	12.8%	4.4%	12.1%	13.6%	12.6%	14.36%
	73	8	11	2	4	3	13	114
Home Rule	12.3%	9.9%	7.0%	22.2%	6.1%	18.2%	5.8%	11.08%
	52	8	6	10	2	4	6	88
Fiscal Autonomy	34.9%	27.2%	34.9%	31.1%	33.3%	40.9%	35.9%	34.13%
	148	22	30	14	11	9	37	271
Don't Know	17.5%	17.3%	20.9%	15.6%	27.3%	22.7%	29.1%	19.77%
	74	14	18	7	9	5	30	157
Answered question	424	81	86	45	33	22	103	794
skipped question								17

9. When do you think the referendum should be held?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
As soon as possible	3.9%	23.2%	47.7%	32.6%	9.1%	21.7%	22.1%	15.10%
	17	19	41	14	3	5	23	122
on the same day as council elections in 2012	3.4%	12.2%	10.5%	11.6%	21.2%	13.0%	9.6%	7.30%
	15	10	9	5	7	3	10	59
On another day in 2012	4.1%	9.8%	8.1%	4.7%	12.1%	4.3%	11.5%	6.44%
	18	8	7	2	4	1	12	52
2013	8.5%	11.0%	5.8%	11.6%	12.1%	8.7%	9.6%	8.91%
	37	9	5	5	4	2	10	72
2014	59.7%	25.6%	8.1%	32.6%	39.4%	34.8%	25.0%	43.32%
	261	21	7	14	13	8	26	350
2015	20.4%	9.8%	3.5%	4.7%	6.1%	13.0%	12.5%	14.85%
	89	8	3	2	2	3	13	120
Never	0.0%	8.5%	16.3%	2.3%	0.0%	4.3%	9.6%	4.08%
	0	7	14	1	0	1	10	33
Answered question	437	82	86	43	33	23	104	808
skipped question								3

10. Do you live								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
In Scotland	93.1%	95.1%	93.0%	93.3%	90.9%	87.0%	99.0%	93.83%
	407	78	80	42	30	20	103	760
In the rest of the UK	2.5%	2.4%	3.5%	4.4%	6.1%	8.7%	1.0%	2.84%
	11	2	3	2	2	2	1	23

	4.3%	2.4%	3.5%	2.2%	3.0%	4.3%	0.0%	3.33%
Elsewhere	19	2	3	1	1	1	0	27
Answered question	437	82	86	45	33	23	104	810
skipped question								1

11. which political party do you most identify with?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
SNP	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.88%
	437	0	0	0	0	0	0	437
Labour	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.11%
	0	82	0	0	0	0	0	82
Conservatives	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.73%
	0	0	87	0	0	0	0	87
Lib Dems	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.55%
	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	45
Greens	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.07%
	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	33
Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	2.84%
	0	0	0	0	0	23	0	23
None	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	12.82%
	0	0	0	0	0	0	104	104
Answered question	437	82	87	45	33	23	104	811
skipped question								0

12. Are you								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
Male	79.5%	70.7%	77.9%	75.0%	45.5%	91.3%	65.4%	75.31%
	345	58	67	33	15	21	68	607
Female	20.5%	29.3%	22.1%	25.0%	54.5%	8.7%	34.6%	24.69%
	89	24	19	11	18	2	36	199
Answered question	434	82	86	44	33	23	104	806
skipped question								5

13. Within which age category do you fall?								
	which political party do you most identify with?							
	SNP	Labour	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Greens	Other	None	Total
<18	0.7%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.62%
	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	5
18-24	7.3%	8.5%	6.9%	8.9%	21.2%	8.7%	5.8%	7.90%
	32	7	6	4	7	2	6	64
25-34	19.0%	39.0%	28.7%	15.6%	33.3%	26.1%	21.2%	22.96%
	83	32	25	7	11	6	22	186
35-44	19.0%	22.0%	12.6%	26.7%	18.2%	17.4%	25.0%	19.75%
	83	18	11	12	6	4	26	160

	22.9%	11.0%	17.2%	22.2%	12.1%	13.0%	25.0%	20.62%
45-54	100	9	15	10	4	3	26	167
	18.3%	17.1%	24.1%	15.6%	9.1%	17.4%	17.3%	18.15%
55-64	80	14	21	7	3	4	18	147
	12.6%	2.4%	8.0%	11.1%	6.1%	17.4%	5.8%	10.00%
65+	55	2	7	5	2	4	6	81
Answered question	436	82	87	45	33	23	104	810
skipped question								1

For further information please contact Reform Scotland on 0131 524 9500.