

# First Minister confident about lowering voting age



Following a trip to London today to have a meeting with the Prime Minister David Cameron, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has expressed confidence that the powers necessary to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote will be devolved to Holyrood in time for the next Scottish Parliament elections.

Speaking outside Number 10 Downing Street after her first meeting with the Prime Minister since she took office, Ms Sturgeon said she believed both Scottish and UK governments would give the matter the required focus to allow the franchise to be extended before the 2016 vote.

The First Minister said the talks had been “constructive and cordial” and that there was a will on behalf of both governments to work together in the interests of the people in Scotland.

But she warned that the early devolution of the necessary powers via a Section 30 order, would offer a significant early test of Westminster’s desire to implement the wider Smith Commission proposals.

The First Minister said:

“The talks with the Prime Minister in Downing Street were constructive and cordial. Clearly David Cameron and I have big political differences and different views on the constitutional future of Scotland, but there was a real appetite on the part of both to find ways of working together in the interests of the people of Scotland.

“Following the meeting, I am confident that we now have the

basis of a deal on the necessary devolution of powers to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year-olds in time for the 2016 election, giving us the opportunity to build on the huge success of the engagement we saw in the referendum.

“But we need to move quickly if this is going to happen. We need to see a Section 30 order that will transfer the legal power to the Scottish Parliament before Westminster breaks up for the General Election to give us the requisite time to enact primary legislation. Following my discussions today, I think that timetable has been accepted and we now need to see a focus by both governments to make it happen.”

The First Minister added:

“The process necessary to transfer the franchise powers is not just important because it will extend the right to vote to 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland. It offers a significant early test of the desire on the part of Westminster to implement the wider proposals contained within the Smith Commission.

“Given the goodwill outlined by both parties during today’s discussions, there is no reason that the focus and desire to take forward this particular change so swiftly should not be extended to the rest of the Commission’s recommendations.”