
COMMUNITY COUNCIL ANNUAL BY-ELECTION 2016

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides statistical information about the 2016 Community Council By-Elections which took place in November 2016 and reflects generally on the membership position within the 56 community councils established in Argyll and Bute since the current Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils came into effect in October 2013.

The current Scheme provides 2 opportunities per annum for Community Councils to increase their membership numbers. The first being by co-option at the AGM (between 1st April and 30th June) and the second is the annual by-election in the Autumn. The by-election is required to formalise any co-option which community councils may put in place at their AGMs. Both opportunities are valued by community councils who see the benefit in increasing membership numbers to assist with their workload.

Community councils are generally in good health in terms of their membership with all 56 currently quorate and 79.5% of all community councils now have over 70% membership. There has been an overall rise in membership levels since 2013 by 11% (net increase) which the report looks at in more detail.

In terms of implications, there is a risk that community councils would become inquorate should there not be opportunities within the Scheme for increasing membership during the 4 year term. There is also no current provision for those under 18 to stand or vote in community council elections which is no longer consistent with Local Government Election Rules however, this can only be amended by altering the Scheme and as the Scheme is in the final year, this amendment will be incorporated as part of the upcoming review process.

The report is for information only although the Committee may of course choose to make any recommendations, especially in view of the fact that the current Scheme is nearing the end of its quadrennial term and will be the subject of a future report to the new Council.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The 2016 community council by-elections took place on 10 November following a lead in period which commenced on 13 September 2016. This report provides some detail and statistics about the by-elections which show Argyll and Bute community councils to be overall in good shape as regards their membership levels.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee notes the position regarding membership of the 56 Argyll and Bute community councils following on from the final by-election in the quadrennial scheme.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Argyll and Bute has 56 Community Councils. 19 in the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area; 17 in the Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area; 12 in the Bute and Cowal area; and 8 in the Helensburgh and Lomond Area. While all 56 are quorate, 1 community council (Campbeltown) sits at 50% membership which is the minimum membership permitted. All other community council membership numbers vary from 62.5% to 100%. 14 Community Councils currently have 100% membership which is the highest recorded number of community councils with full membership during the current 4 year term.
- 4.2 This year's by-election saw 47 of our 56 community councils participate (15 from MAKI, 14 OLI, 10 B&C and 8 H&L). Six community councils had 100% membership and therefore no need to participate and 3 chose not to opt into the process. A total of 180 vacancies were advertised with 73 valid nominations received. This resulted in one contest for Helensburgh Community Council who had 7 valid nominations for 6 places. A postal ballot took place with around 11,000 postal packs being issued and a turnout rate of 25.6%. The results were declared following a count conducted on 11 November 2016. Overall 72 community councillors were elected (40% of the vacancies advertised) and an additional 8 Community Councils now have full membership bringing the total to 14.

Unfortunately, 12 community councils (7 in MAKI, 4 in OLI and 1 in B&C) received no valid nominations. It is hoped that they will successfully recruit additional members at their 2017 AGMs.

- 4.3 The provision for co-option and annual by-elections within the Scheme has successfully increased overall membership from 68.5% with, or higher than, 70% membership (when the Scheme can into effect in October 2013) to the current figure recorded of 79.5% with 70% or higher membership. The table below looks at the impact co-option and by-elections have had on membership figures

Year	Membership before Co-option or By-election	Membership after C-option (C) or By-Election (B)	Increase in Membership
2013	68.5% (after full elections)	n/a	n/a
2014	68.5%	69.1% (C)	0.6%
2014	69.1%	78.2% (B)	9.1%
2015	78.2%	78.4% (C)	0.2%
2015	78.4%	78.7% (B)	0.3%
2016	78.7%	82.3% (C)	3.6%
2016	73.7%	79.5% (B)	5.8%
Total			19.6%

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The 2016 by-election has again been successful by increasing overall membership levels within our community councils.
- 5.2 Provisions for a review of the current scheme and the next period of elections will come forward to the new council at an early date.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None, running annual by-elections are consistent with policy.
- 6.2 Financial – None, these costs are absorbed within the overall budget
- 6.3 Legal – None, election rules are adhered to as part of the process
- 6.4 HR – None, elections are conducted by staff in addition to their other roles
- 6.5 Equalities – At present those under 18 are not permitted to stand or vote in CC elections. There is a commitment to review this as part of the next Scheme
- 6.6 Risk – By not providing opportunities for community councils to increase their membership there is a risk that they become inquorate and unable to perform their statutory role
- 6.7 Customer Service – None, there are a range of options for submitting nomination forms such as email, in person at one of the

council Service points or by post.

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