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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**21 FEBRUARY 2019**

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**REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2018-20**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires Argyll and Bute Council to undertake a review, between the dates of 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020, of polling districts and polling places within the Argyll and Bute UK Parliamentary Constituency for the purposes of UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

The Council is being asked to agree the following recommendations:-

- a) Note that polling districts and polling places will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis by the Returning Officer to whom authority has already been delegated to make alterations in response to changing circumstances;
- b) Note that under the provisions of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 a further formal review of polling districts and polling places will require to be carried out by the end of January 2025 and on a 5 yearly basis thereafter;
- c) Approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1;
- d) Note the representations received during the consultation period detailed in Appendix 2 together with the Returning Officer comments thereon.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires Argyll and Bute Council to undertake a review, between the dates of 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020, of polling districts and polling places within the Argyll and Bute UK Parliamentary Constituency for the purposes of UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Council is being asked to:-

- 3.1 Note that polling districts and polling places will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis by the Returning Officer to whom authority has already been delegated to make alterations in response to changing circumstances;
- 3.2 Note that under the provisions of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 a further formal review of polling districts and polling places will require to be carried out by the end of January 2025 and on a 5 yearly basis thereafter;
- 3.3 Approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1;
- 3.4 Note the representations received during the consultation period detailed in Appendix 2 together with the Returning Officer comments thereon.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 There has always been a requirement on the relevant local authority to keep under review the polling districts and polling places used at parliamentary and local government elections. Section 17 of the Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires every local authority to undertake a review by the end of January 2020, and every fifth year thereafter. In practice in Argyll and Bute the fixing of polling district boundaries and polling places is delegated to the Chief Executive, who also acts as the Returning Officer for parliamentary and local

government elections.

- 4.2 The polling districts and polling places were last reviewed in Argyll and Bute in 2015. The polling district boundaries and polling places are the same for all elections whether UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary or local government elections.
- 4.3 The aims of the review were to seek to ensure that:
  - (a) all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
  - (b) so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who may have a disability.
- 4.4 In an ideal world electoral administrators would have the choice of a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for the electors in the area. In practice, however, this is not always the case and there may be little choice available. Where it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal then every reasonable adjustment is made to provide access for all electors. The choice of polling place will often be a balance between the quality (access, facilities, etc.) of a building and the distances between the residents and that building compared to other options for polling places. There is no fixed rule on how to decide how this should be done. The legislation provides that all electors in a constituency should have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 4.5 The review was held from 1 October 2018 and details of the proposals were sent to all Elected Members, Community Councils, relevant Constituency MPs and MSPs, local Access Panels and the Electoral Registration Officer. These proposals are set out in Appendix I. Notices were posted, and copies of the documentation made available for public view, in Council Service Points and on the website. Representations on the proposed scheme were invited by 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018.
- 4.6 A number of representations have been received and these are detailed in Appendix 2, together with the Returning Officers comments.
- 4.7 Note: Machrihanish Golf Club fire – there are no scheduled elections until 2021 and the owners of the club are planning to rebuild the building within this timeframe meanwhile the Returning Officer will explore alternative venues in the event of an election being called.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Having taken into account the responses to the consultation, and in the knowledge that (a) polling districts and polling places will continue to be

reviewed on an on-going basis by the Returning Officer, to whom authority has already been delegated to make alterations in response to changing circumstances; and (b) under the provisions of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 a further formal review will require to be carried out by 2025 and on a 5 yearly basis thereafter, it is concluded that Appendix 1 be approved as the final scheme for polling districts and polling stations for Argyll and Bute.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - None
- 6.2 Financial - None
- 6.3 Legal - None
- 6.4 HR - None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - None
  - 6.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics - None
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - None
  - 6.5.3 Islands - None
- 6.6 Risk - None
- 6.7 Customer Service - None

**Executive Director of Customer Services – Douglas Hendry**

**Policy Lead - Councillor Rory Colville**

14 January 2019

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1

Appendix 2