

ANNUAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL BY-ELECTION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update for partners to note on the membership of community councils in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands following the annual community council by-elections.
- 1.2 The 2014 annual by-election has resulted in an increase in membership of 11 community councils, it has increased the number of community councils with 100% membership from 3 (pre-election) to 5 (post-election) and managed to fill 55.8% of the vacancies advertised. Only one community council which opted into the by-election did not manage to increase membership.
- 1.3 The Council has undertaken to provide an annual by-election for community councils to increase their membership levels and formalise any co-option undertaken at an AGM by the community councils.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL ANNUAL BY-ELECTION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At present there are 18 established community councils in the Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands Area. Each of those 18 community councils were offered opportunity to opt into the 2014 annual community council by-election process in effort to strengthen their membership or otherwise to allow any co-opted members the opportunity to put themselves forward as a candidate in the election. North Knapdale, who have been without community council representation for some time, were also included in the by-election process in effort to establish a community council to represent this area.
- 2.2 This report provides partners with information about the annual by-election process and the impact that this has had on membership of community councils.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Mid Argyll, Kintyre & the Islands Area Community Planning Group note that the 2014 annual by-election has taken place and as a result 29 new community councillors have been elected to 11 different community councils in the area.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 17 community councils were offered the opportunity to participate in the 2014 annual by-election. North Knapdale (who do not yet have a community council) were automatically included in the process. Of those 17, 3 indicated that they had no vacancies to advertise, 3 did not respond to the offer, 1 declined to participate and 10 opted in to the process seeking to fill a total of 44 vacancies.
- 4.2 The nomination process commenced on 9 October and concluded on 27 October. A total of 29 valid nominations were received and were in respect of the following community councils:

Southend – 2 candidates for 2 vacancies
West Kintyre – 1 candidate for 2 vacancies
Tarbert & Skipness – 5 candidates for 8 vacancies
Islay – 3 candidates for 6 vacancies
Jura – 3 candidates for 3 vacancies
Colonsay – 2 candidates for 4 vacancies
North Knapdale – 4 candidates for 8 vacancies
Ardishaig – 1 candidate for 3 vacancies

Lochgilphead – 5 candidates for 7 vacancies
Inveraray – 2 candidates for 3 vacancies
Dunadd – 1 candidate for 5 vacancies
West Lochfyne – 0 candidates for 1 vacancy

- 4.3 From the detail above it can be noted that there will be 11 uncontested elections and with North Knapdale achieving the required 50% of candidates required to establish a community council, will, from 27 November have a community council in place. The Returning Officer is currently taking forward arrangements to call an inaugural meeting of the North Knapdale Community Council to formally constitute the community council.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 A total of 29 candidates will be elected to serve on 11 different community councils at 11am on 27 November 2014.
- 5.2 The 2014 by-election has been successful in that it has increased membership in all but 1 of the councils participating in the by-election, it has filled a total of 55.8% of the vacancies advertised (when North Knapdale's 8 vacancies are taken into account) and has increased the number of community councils with 100% membership from 3 to 5.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None, the holding of annual by-elections are consistent with policy
- 6.2 Financial – There is an expense associated with running annual by-elections, particularly when contests arise and this will inevitably put pressure on the election budget.
- 6.3 Legal – None, annual by-elections are required to comply with the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils.
- 6.4 HR – None, while this creates additional pressure on staff in terms of increased workload, the staffing resource is contained to existing postholders.
- 6.5 Equalities – In accordance with existing election franchise, nominations are only accepted from those over 18 who are resident within the community council boundary. This accords with election rules.
- 6.6 Risk – Contested elections do increase pressure on annual budgets
- 6.7 Customer Service – Elections are advertised on the website, in local papers and community councils also promote within their own area. Nominees can lodge nomination papers at their local service points, by post or by email therefore there should be at no disadvantage due to remoteness.

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