

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 Bute & Cowal following the annual community council by-elections.
- 1.2 The 2014 annual by-election has resulted in an increase in those community councils with 100% membership by doubling the figure from 3 (pre-election) to 6 (post-election). In respect of the other 4 community councils taking part in the by-election, 50% (2) did not manage to increase their membership as there were no nomination papers received by the Returning Officer. There will be one contested election for Bute Community Council which will become one of the 6 community councils in Bute & Cowal with 100% membership following the issue and subsequent receipt of postal ballot papers to the electorate on Bute. The Bute Community Council contest commences with the issue of postal ballot papers on 10 November 2014 with polling concluding at 4pm on 27 November 2014 and the results being declared at the count on 28 November 2014.
- 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 12 established community councils in the Bute & Cowal Area. Each of those 12 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.
- 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 Bute & Cowal Area Community Planning Group note that the 2014 annual by-election has taken place and as a result 14 new community councillors have been elected to 5 different community councils in the area.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Twelve community councils in the Bute and Cowal area were offered opportunity to participate in the 2014 annual community council by-election. Of those 12, 3 indicated that they had no vacancies to advertise, 1 did not respond to the offer, 1 declined to participate and 7 opted in to the process seeking to fill a total of 27 vacancies.
- 4.2 The nomination process commenced on 9 October and concluded on 27 October. A total of 17 valid nominations were received and were in respect of the following community councils:
- Strachur – 2 candidates for 5 vacancies
 - Kilfinan – 0 candidates for 3 vacancies
 - Hunter's Quay – 0 candidates for 3 vacancies
 - Kilmun – 5 candidates for 5 vacancies
 - Dunoon – 1 candidate for 5 vacancies
 - South Cowal – 4 candidates for 4 vacancies
 - Bute – 5 candidates for 2 vacancies
- 4.3 From the detail above it can be noted that there will be 4 uncontested elections and one contest for Bute Community Council who have attracted more candidates than vacancies. Because of this, a postal ballot for the Bute electorate has been organised with postal ballot packs being distributed on Monday 10 November, polling closing at 4pm on Thursday 27 November and a

count taking place on 28 November 2014.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 A total of 12 candidates will be elected to serve on 4 different community councils at 11am on 27 November 2014. A further 2 candidates will be elected following a postal ballot of the Bute electorate, results of which will be announced on 28 November 2014.
- 5.2 The 2014 by-election has been successful in that it has doubled the number of community councils with 100% membership from 3 to 6 and increased membership in all but 2 of the councils participating in the by-election.

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.

Executive Director of Customer Services

Policy Lead – Councillor Robin Currie, Community & Culture, and Strategic Housing

13 November 2014

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