

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires Argyll and Bute Council to undertake a review, by the end of February 2015, of polling districts and polling places within the Argyll and Bute UK Parliamentary Constituency for the purposes of UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary, European Parliament and Local Government elections.
2. 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 February 2015, 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.
3. The polling district boundaries and polling places are the same for all elections whether UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary, European or local government elections.
4. The aims of the review are 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.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to:

- (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 February 2020 and on a 5 yearly basis thereafter;

(c) Approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1 on the basis that there are no changes proposed as this time; and

(d) Agree

1. that in the event of there being no material representations received from the consultation to delegate approval of the scheme to the Executive Director of Customer Services or

2. if there are material representations received to delegate to the Policy and Resources Committee to determine, at their meeting on 19th March, any amendments to the attached proposals in light of representations received by 20th February 2015.

(e) Note that as part of a major Boundary Commission review that will come forward later this year, the Council will have regard to the discontinuation of the use of schools as polling stations and a further report will be brought to Committee later in 2015.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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- (c) Approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1 on the basis that there are no changes proposed as this time; and
- (d) Agree
 1. that in the event of there being no material representations received from the consultation to delegate approval of the scheme to the Executive Director of Customer Services or
 2. if there are material representations received to delegate to the Policy and Resources Committee to determine, at their meeting on 19th March, any amendments to the attached proposals in light of representations received by 20th February 2015.
- (e) Note that as part of a major Boundary Commission review that will come forward later this year, the Council will have regard to the discontinuation of the use of schools as polling stations and a further report will be brought to Committee later in 2015.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 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 February 2015, 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.
- 3.2 The polling districts and polling places were last reviewed in Argyll and Bute in 2011. The polling district boundaries and polling places are the same for all elections whether UK Parliamentary, Scottish Parliamentary, European or local government elections.
- 3.3 The aims of the review are 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The review is underway and details of the proposals have been sent to all Councillors, relevant Constituency MPs and MSPs, local Access Panels and the Electoral Registration Officer. These proposals are set out in Appendix I. Notices have also been posted, and copies of the documentation made available for public view, in Council Service Points and on the website. Representations on the proposed scheme are invited by 20th February 2015.
- 3.6 Should any representations be received before the closing date it is recommended that these be submitted to, and any proposed amendments to the attached proposals determined by, the Policy and Resources Committee at the meeting on 19th March 2015.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1	Policy	None
4.2	Financial	None
4.3	Legal	None
4.4	HR	None
4.5	Equalities	None
4.6	Risk	None
4.7	Customer Service	None

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director of Customer Services
5 January 2015

For further information contact: Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager

APPENDICES

Returning Officer Report
Appendix 1