
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES – 2023/24

1. The Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires Argyll and Bute Council to undertake a review, by the end of January 2025, 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.
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 January 2025, 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 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.
5. 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.
6. A review of the polling arrangements has now been completed by the Election team and this review considered a range of data including:
 - Experience of the current polling arrangements in recent electoral events
 - Feedback from Polling Staff and Polling Inspectors
 - Comments and complaints from voters

- Advice from the Valuation Joint Board / ERO with respect to anticipated changes in the electorate
 - Proposed housing developments
 - Equality and Diversity policy / Accessibility of polling places
 - Cost of polling place hire
7. The proposals now need to be the subject of Public Consultation before being considered and agreed by Councillors at a Meeting of Argyll and Bute Council. The Formal Notice was published on 2 October 2023, together with details of the proposals and copies sent to all Elected Members, Community Councils, relevant Constituency MPs and MSPs, Election Agents, Local Access Panels and the Electoral Registration Officer. These proposals are set out in Appendix 1 (proposals for public consultation). Notices were also posted, and copies of the documentation made available for public view and on the Councils website. Representations on the proposed scheme are invited by 30 October 2023.
8. In the knowledge that (a) polling districts and polling places will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis by me as 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 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, **it is my conclusion that the scheme of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1 be approved.**
9. In the event of any representations being received between now and the closing date of 30 October, these will be reported to the appropriate Council Meeting in November 2023.

Pippa Milne
Returning Officer

Date: 2 October 2023