

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration****West Dunbartonshire Council: 30 August 2023**

Subject: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the requirement to conduct a review of polling districts and polling places within its area and to outline the timetable and processes for carrying out this review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) notes the statutory requirement to conduct a review of polling districts and places within its area;
- (b) approves the Notice of Review and timetable as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (c) notes that a report containing the final proposals and representations will be submitted for approval to the meeting of Council in December 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1** In terms of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the Council is required to carry out a full review every five years and accordingly this is now due to take place. The previous full review of Polling Districts and Polling Places by this Council was completed and published in December 2018. However, Members may be aware that an interim review was conducted in 2020, due to the loss of some polling places.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** A copy of the proposed timetable and public notice for the conduct of the review is attached as Appendix 1 to this report, for approval. Appendix 2 provides, for information, a list of those polling places used in the Local Government Elections. However, members will note that not all of the new polling places identified proposed in the 2020 interim review, were utilised due to social distancing as a result of the Covid pandemic. These polling places and any others identified by the election office will be considered again as part of the full review.

- 4.2** When carrying out a review, the Council is required by law to consult the local Parliamentary Returning Officer, who must submit representations to the authority on the polling scheme. These representations must be published by the authority with relevant parties being given the opportunity to comment on them. The Returning Officer's representations will be published on the Council's website and made available in offices and libraries in accordance with the proposed timetable. A copy of the Returning Officer's representations will also be issued to all elected members and a range of local organisations, which represent disabled and elderly people, for comment.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no implications for employees of this Council.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications arising from the consultation but there may be some financial implications from any proposals to be considered in due course.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** As previously stated the Council is required by statute to complete the review within the required timescales. Failure to do so could result in reputational damage to the Council.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The Council must ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place within the area is accessible to electors who are disabled. Furthermore, organisations representing disabled people and the elderly will be invited to comment on the Returning Officer's representations. If necessary, an EIA will be carried out in advance of any proposals to change polling places being presented to Council in December.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Officers from legal and finance have been consulted on the content of this report.
- 9.2** A formal public consultation will take place once the Returning Officer's representations are available for inspection in October.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** This report does not have a direct impact on the Council's Strategic priorities. However, the Council is required by statute to carry out this review and therefore must do so within the prescribed timescales.

Alan Douglas
Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration

Date: 25 June 2023

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Appendices:

1. Proposed public notice and timetable for the review of polling districts and polling places.
2. List of Polling Places used in the Local Government Elections in West Dunbartonshire, held in May 2022.

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All