

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 26 October 2011

Subject: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2011

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise the Council on representations received in relation to the proposed Scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places for parliamentary elections and to recommend adoption of a final scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1** The previous review of Polling Districts and Polling Places by this Council was completed and published in December 2007. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that every local authority must complete a further review of each polling district and place in its area before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous such review.
- 2.2** In terms of the above legislation, Councils must ensure that all electors in parliamentary constituencies within their areas have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable, and that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place within the area is accessible to electors who are disabled.
- 2.3** At its meeting on 31 August 2011, the Council approved the arrangements for conducting the review and accordingly copies of the Returning Officer's representations were sent to all elected members and a range of local organisations, which represent disabled and elderly people, for comment. The deadline for submission of representations was 4 October 2011.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** As stated in the representations by the Returning Officer, there is only one small proposed change to the existing polling district boundaries which has been necessary due to an anomaly in the alignment of the Scottish Parliamentary boundary between the Dumbarton Constituency and Clydebank & Milngavie Constituency. This anomaly resulted in 10 electors located in Polling District WD 34 (a Dumbarton Constituency polling district) being located in the Clydebank & Milngavie constituency. It is therefore proposed that this boundary anomaly be corrected at this time and that WD34 be removed completely resulting in these electors voting in the appropriate Clydebank area polling districts. Copies of the revised polling district maps depicting this change were made available for inspection at the Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton and Rosebery Place, Clydebank, and on the Council's website.

3.2 No comments have been received in respect of the proposed change to the polling districts as detailed above.

3.3 Only one response was received from the One Thirty Club as follows:

With regard to the above (Polling Place Review 2011) I think these alterations are acceptable. It will make the areas more accessible to wheelchair users and those who are less mobile. Due to the increase in postal voters, fewer booths should be needed.

3.4 The number of polling stations at each place and therefore the number of polling booths has been determined on the numbers of electors allocated to each polling place less postal voters and therefore there is no need to make any further reductions to the number of booths in each polling place.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no implications for employees of the Council.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are potentially financial implications of adopting new polling places which require improved access as only 50% of funding is met by the Scotland Office in preparation for an election. Costs will vary depending on the number of premises used and the nature of adaptations required. At present, all of our designated polling places have disabled access.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 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. All polling places are inspected with a view to identifying and eliminating avoidable hazards and polling staff are provided with check lists to ensure that such hazards are identified and dealt with early.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 As stated in paragraph 2.2. of this report, 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 have been invited to comment on the Returning Officer's representations. This year only one comment was received and this has been highlighted in paragraph 3.3 above.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** The Council is required by statute to carry out this review and therefore must do so. However, the purpose of the review does fit with the Council's Strategic Priorities in that it asks the Council to consider the impact of the proposed polling scheme on vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled with a view to making improvements to service delivery.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** It is recommended that the Council considers the Returning Officers' representations and formally adopts the preferred scheme of polling districts and places as the Council's approved scheme.

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
7 October 2011

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Appendices:

- (1) Summary of Existing and Proposed Polling Places and Polling Districts for the West Dunbartonshire County Constituency.
- (2) Details of Proposed Places together with the Returning Officer's Representations.

Wards Affected: All Wards

Background Papers: Report to Council on 31 August 2011 on the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2011

Letter from One Thirty Club.