

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 20 December 2006

Subject: Designation of Polling Places

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to consider the designation of polling places for the combined poll on 3 May 2007.

2. Background

- 2.1** At the combined poll, the Returning Officer is responsible for the conduct of the elections to the Clydebank and Milngavie and to the Dumbarton Scottish Parliament constituencies. As a result, the election team will administer the poll for 2 part wards of East Dunbartonshire Council as well as for 3 full wards of Argyll and Bute Council. These two councils will set polling places within their own areas, but it falls to this Council to designate the polling places within the West Dunbartonshire boundary.
- 2.2** The unavoidable delay in obtaining approval for the Council's ward boundaries has resulted in a knock-on delay to essential preparations for the elections. The Working Group on the Local Government Boundary Review and the Single Transferable Vote agreed the polling district boundaries at its meeting on 13 December, subject to a proposed alteration to a polling district boundary in Clydebank Waterfront being agreed by the local member. The next step is to designate the polling places.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** As a result of the delays experienced to date, it is now a matter of urgency to fix the polling places for the election.
- 3.2** As before, the main priority in choosing a polling place is its accessibility. Preference is given to locations which allow a single access suitable for both able bodied and disabled electors.
- 3.3** The presumption is not to use (and therefore close) a school for election day where suitable alternative premises exist. However, the alternative premises must be satisfactory in terms of access. In this way, we would not propose to use the Gowdie Centre again as a polling place but will revert to Goldenhill Primary School. Other polling places will be subject to re-evaluation. The input of elected members is essential to this exercise.

3.4 A satisfactory solution remains to be identified to replace Milton Primary School Annex.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues arising from this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There is a cost to the Council of closing premises which is not defrayed in full by the recharge made to the Scottish Executive. Councils are allowed to recharge only the cost of heating, lighting and janitation. For combined elections, this is defrayed at 50% with the remaining costs met by Council. In addition, the cost of any temporary ramps is only defrayed in part.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Given the urgency of finalising the polling scheme for the May elections, it is recommended that the Council remit to the Chief Executive, in consultation with elected members, to designate the polling places within West Dunbartonshire Council area for the May 2007 combined polls.

David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 14 December 2006

Wards Affected: All wards

Background Papers: Minute of Meeting of the Working Group on the Local Government Boundary Review and Single Transferable Vote held on 13/6/2007

Officer to Contact: Anne Laird, Manager of Administrative Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton Tel 01389 737514 or e-mail: anne.laird@west-dunbarton.gov.uk