

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	14 December 2011
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Polling Places Review
REPORT NUMBER:	OCE/11/014

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Section 16 of The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires each Local Authority to conduct a full review of polling districts and polling places for use at parliamentary elections, every four years. In doing so the Local Authority must ensure reasonable facilities for voting and that polling places are accessible to all electors, including voters with a disability, so far as is practicable.

The most recent review of this type was completed in December 2010. Therefore, a full review of polling districts and polling places was not required at this time. The review that has been undertaken concentrates on polling places and takes account of learning and feedback from elections held since the last full review and any changes in circumstances.

At the Council meeting of 6 October 2011, the Council agreed the recommended changes to polling places as outlined in the report to that meeting (OCE/11/009) with two exceptions. Requests were made to continue using Old Torry Community Centre as the polling place for the Torry East polling district and to use Danestone Congregational Church for the polling districts of Danestone North, Mugiemoor and Danestone South.

In addition, the Council agreed to proceed to public consultation on the proposals. The purpose of this report is to gain the final approval of the Council for the list of polling places, following the completion of the period of public consultation.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council approves the attached list of polling places.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report have implications for the use of some Council buildings on Polling Day.

#### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Following the Council meeting on 6 October 2011, the list of recommended polling places was amended as follows:

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Polling Place for elections in 2011</b>	<b>Recommended Polling Place for all future elections</b>	<b>Explanation of Changes</b>
SS1207 (Torry East)	Old Torry Community Centre	Old Torry Community Centre	Old Torry Community Centre will continue to be available and so no change is necessary.
DG0106 (Danestone North)  DN0109 (Mugiemoss)  DG0110 (Danestone South)	Danestone Primary School	Danestone Congregational Church	Requested in order that Danestone Primary School can remain open on polling day.

The public consultation was advertised in the local press and on the Council website. Consultation was also undertaken with the Disability Advisory Group, Community Councils and with Broomhill Primary School Parent Council, which had requested that an alternative to Broomhill Primary School be found.

The deadline for representations from the public was Monday 5 December and eight were received.

Seven expressed support for moving the polling place for Broomhill East from Broomhill Primary School to Ruthrieston Outdoor Sports Centre.

One suggested that a polling place be set up within Aberdeen University Hillhead Halls of Residence, in order to provide a facility specifically for the students there. After consideration, it is recommended that the current voting arrangements for this area are maintained.

The University has confirmed that only students would be able to access a polling place situated within Halls of Residence. There can only be one polling place per polling district and it should be situated in a location which is open to all. A change in polling district boundaries would allow for a polling place within Halls of Residence, however, this presents significant logistical difficulties and is made more problematic by where we are in the electoral calendar. In addition, an increase in polling places has financial

consequences at a time when we are reducing the total number of polling stations in order to minimise costs.

At forthcoming elections we will encourage awareness raising and participation events with the University.

## 6. IMPACT

When identifying suitable polling places the aim is to put the interest of voters first and to ensure equality of access. The Returning Officer has a statutory duty to encourage electoral participation and selection of appropriate polling places is an important part of this. Feedback and requests from local communities is always considered and acted upon where possible and appropriate.

Consultation has taken place with the Disability Advisory Group and Community Councils.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Preparation for the 2012 Local Government Elections, report to Council Meeting of 6 October 2011 (OCE/11/009)

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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