

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	18 December 2013
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/12/035

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must now take place between 1st October 2013 and 31st January 2015.

The purpose of this report is to satisfy these requirements and to set the polling places to be used for the European Parliamentary Elections in May 2014 and the Scottish Independence Referendum in September 2014.

The requirements of this review are set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The purpose of this report is to gain the final approval of the Council for the list of polling districts and polling places, following public consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. That the Council approves that no changes to polling districts be made.
- b. 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

The Council considered a report from the Chief Executive on the matter (OCE/13/027) at its meeting on 31 October 2013. The Council i) agreed that no changes to polling districts be recommended, ii) agreed the

recommended changes to polling places as outlined in that report and iii) agreed to proceed to public consultation on the recommendations.

Following the Council Meeting of 31 October 2013, the implications for polling places in Newhills and Bucksburn of the development of the new Brimmond School on the existing Newhills School site were clarified and as a result it has now been confirmed that Newhills Primary School is no longer available and that Bucksburn Primary School will be available until the end of June 2014. It is therefore proposed that the following changes be made.

Polling District	DN0104 (Newhills)	DN0108 (Bucksburn)
Previous Polling Place	Newhills Primary School	Bucksburn Primary School
Recommended Change	Beacon Community Centre until August 2014. Brimmond School from August 2014.	Beacon Community Centre from August 2014.

Public Consultation

The public consultation was advertised in the local press and on the Council website. Consultation was also undertaken with the Returning Officer for Aberdeenshire, the Disability Advisory Group and Community Councils.

The deadline for representations was Wednesday 4 December 2013. No representations relating to polling districts were received. With regard to polling places, 3 representations were received as follows.

Bridge of Don Community Council requested that the proposal to move from Middleton Park Primary School, if it were no longer available after June 2014, to The Jesmond Centre, be removed from the consultation. The reasoning for this was that there has been no decision as yet on the proposed amalgamation of Middleton Park and Glashieburn Schools. The response to Bridge of Don Community Council indicated that the proposal would not be removed from the consultation as it was necessary for the Returning Officer to make contingency plans for the eventuality that Middleton Park School was not available. It was also stressed that this review is happening entirely separately from any work around the proposed amalgamation of Middleton Park and Glashieburn Schools.

Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council expressed support for the Beacon Community Centre being used as a polling place for the Bucksburn and Newhills area.

Garthdee Community Council requested that the polling place for Garthdee and Kaimhill polling districts be moved from Kaimhill Community Centre to Inchgarth Community Centre. The reasons expressed for this were that Inchgarth Community Centre is better known to the local community, it is geographically more central within the two polling districts and there is a lack of parking at the Kaimhill Community Centre. The

submission also stated that two polling places would be welcomed for the 2 polling districts, with Inchgarth Community Centre being the preferred choice if there were just one.

It is recommended that the polling place for Garthdee and Kaimhill polling districts remains as Kaimhill Community Centre. At the time of the 2011 Polling Districts and Polling Places Review, Council agreed the recommendation to move from Inchgarth Community Centre to Kaimhill Community Centre. The reasons for this move were the hire of Inchgarth Community Centre is expensive and can present logistical difficulties. Kaimhill Community Centre was used successfully in 2012. Whilst not being as central within the 2 polling districts as Inchgarth Community Centre, it is still adequately central and indeed the two sites are relatively close together. Previous elections have shown that one polling place is sufficient to serve the two polling districts.

Scottish Independence Referendum

Further changes to polling places may be required for the Scottish Independence Referendum if an increase in the number of polling stations exceeds the capacity of some polling places. Clarification on a number of points is required before a revised polling scheme, showing the number of polling stations to be used, can be finalised. These include, the increase in the electorate as a result of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and whether there is to be any guidance issued nationally regarding the number of voters to be issued to each polling station. If changes for the Scottish Independence Referendum are to be recommended, the proposals will be brought to a Council meeting early next year and will be subject to a period of public consultation.

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 are always considered and acted upon where possible and appropriate.

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

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

It is important that the designated polling districts and polling places are determined in time for future elections and for the currently scheduled polls in 2014.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Polling Districts and Polling Places Review, report to Council Meeting of 31 October 2013 (OCE/13/027)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

David Gow
Team Manager (Civic Support)
davidgow@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Telephone: 01224 (52)3881