

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	5 March 2014
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Polling Places at the Scottish Independence Referendum
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/14/004

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

At its meeting on 18 December 2013, the Council considered a report from the Chief Executive regarding the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places and agreed the final list of polling places (OCE /12/035).

It was noted within that report that further changes to polling places may be required for the Scottish Independence Referendum if an increase in the number of polling stations required exceeds the capacity of any polling places.

The draft polling scheme for the Scottish Independence Referendum shows an increase in polling stations at a number of polling places. This report proposes what changes to polling places require to be made in order to accommodate this increase.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. That subject to any changes, the Council agrees the recommended changes to polling places as outlined.
- b. That following approval of the recommended changes to polling places, the Council proceeds to public consultation.
- c. That following the conclusion of public consultation the final Polling Place scheme for the Scottish Independence Scheme will be brought to the Council in May 2014 for approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

In further reviewing the number of polling stations required for the Scottish Independence Referendum, it has been identified that two of the polling places have insufficient capacity to accommodate additional stations.

The number of stations to be used for the Referendum has been increased in order to mitigate any pressures associated with an increased turnout and as a result the 132 polling stations in use for the European Parliamentary Election will be increased to 174 for the Referendum. However, only an additional two polling places are required to be added as follows:

Polling District	DG0102 (Dyce North)	SS1102 (Mannofield)
Normal Polling Place	Dyce Church Hall	Mannofield Church Centenary Hall
Recommended Change for the Scottish Independence Referendum	Dyce Church – Dr Cox Room	Mannofield Church Hall
Reason for Change	Dyce Church Hall will accommodate 4 polling stations in total for polling districts DG0101 (Kirkhill) and DG0103 (Dyce South). This is the maximum number it can hold. Dyce Church – Dr Cox Room is located close by and across the road from Dyce Church Hall.	Mannofield Church Centenary Hall will accommodate 2 polling stations for polling district SS1103 (Broomhill West). The maximum number it can hold is 3. A further 2 polling stations are required for SS1102. Mannofield Church Centenary Hall and Mannofield Church Hall are part of the same building.

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.

An extensive public consultation was undertaken during November last year on the full list of polling places and the two additional places recommended for use for the Referendum have been used by the Returning Officer during recent elections. The current revision will be published on the Council's website and proactive contact will be made with the relevant Community Councils and the Disability Advisory Group.

The public consultation will run for a period of four weeks. Following its conclusion the final Polling Place scheme for the Scottish Independence Scheme will be brought to the Council in May 2014 for approval.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

It is important that the designated polling places are determined in time for the Scottish Independence Referendum and that they are fit for purpose.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Polling Districts and Polling Places Review, report to Council Meeting of 18 December 2013 (OCE/12/035)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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