

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2014
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Polling Places at the Scottish Independence Referendum
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/14/028
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report brings before the Council and update on the arrangements being made for the delivery of the Scottish Independence Referendum in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council notes the polling scheme established for the Scottish Independence Referendum.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At its meetings on 5 March 2014 and 14 May 2014 the Council considered reports by the Chief Executive regarding polling places at the Scottish Independence Referendum (OCE/14/004 and OCE/14/013 respectively). At its meeting on 14 May, the Council was informed of the Chief Counting Officer's direction that there should be a maximum of 800 electors, excluding postal voters, allocated to each polling station at the Referendum.

As a result, the polling scheme presented to the Council on 14 May which envisaged the use of 174 polling stations on 18 September 2014 has now been revised and is attached for the information of members.

There will now be a total of 225 polling stations (7 of which will have two ballot boxes). This is an increase of 93 stations over the number used in May for the European Parliamentary Elections.

Work continues in assessing the capacity of the current polling places to ensure that where necessary each can accommodate the increased number of stations. It is recognised however, that there may be a requirement for a relatively small number of additional polling places to be identified.

Each polling station will be staffed by a Presiding Officer and a Polling Clerk, so it can be seen that the additional stations will require an immediate increase of 186 in the number of staff required for September over those employed in the polling stations in May. Thought is also being given to employing Information Officers in some of the polling places with the largest number of stations.

The Chief Executive (Designate) in her capacity as Counting Officer is working with the members of the Extended Corporate Management Team to ensure that staff are made available to work in the polling stations on 18 September and at the count on 18/19 September. As members will be aware, the Council has a statutory duty to provide, or ensure the provision of, such property, staff and services as the Counting Officer may require to carry out her functions.

## 6. IMPACT

When identifying polling places the aim of the Returning Officer is to put the interests of the voter first, ensuring equality of access. The Returning Officer has a statutory duty to encourage electoral participation and the selection of appropriate polling places is an important aspect of this work. Feedback from local communities is always considered and acted upon where possible and appropriate.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The finalised polling scheme for the Scottish Independence Referendum must be established in time to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the poll in Aberdeen.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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