

To: Council

On: 28th February 2019

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Statutory Review of Polling Places and Polling Districts

1. Summary

- 1.1 In terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended, local authorities are required to divide their area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary and other elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts and keep them under review.
- 1.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 further amended the Representation of the People Act 1983 by introducing a statutory duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed by the end of January 2015 and at least every 5 years thereafter.
- 1.3 The current polling arrangements following the previous statutory review were approved by Council on 27th February 2014, for use in all elections thereafter in the period to the next review. However, the Boundary Commission's Fifth Electoral Review resulted in the creation of an additional Council Ward and consequent significant changes to the Council's Ward boundaries. A revised Polling Plan was therefore adopted by the Council on 15th December 2016.
- 1.4 This report sets out the process for conducting the next statutory review which must be concluded by January 2020.
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2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Council note the content of this report.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed by the end of January 2015 and at least five yearly thereafter.
- 3.2 Here in Renfrewshire the current polling arrangements were approved by Council on 27th February 2014, for use in all elections thereafter in the period to the next review. However, the Boundary Commission's Fifth Electoral Review resulted in the creation of an additional Council Ward. That in turn meant that a number of the existing polling districts were dissected by the new ward boundaries. A revised Polling Plan was therefore adopted by the Council on 15th December 2016. A copy of that Polling Plan is attached as Appendix 1 hereto.
- 3.3 Although the review is conducted on the basis of UK Parliamentary constituencies it is intended that the revised Polling Plan will align with the Scottish Parliamentary constituency boundaries and Council Ward boundaries, thus avoiding the necessity for differing polling plans for different types of election.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the Scottish Parliamentary constituency boundaries for Paisley, Renfrewshire North and West, and Renfrewshire South include parts of East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils' areas. These Councils will review the polling districts and polling places for these areas as part of their own authorities' statutory reviews.
- 3.5 The timetable for the conduct of the review here in Renfrewshire will be as follows:

1	Notice Published	1 March 2019
2	Representations by interested parties were sought by	1 May 2019
3	Council will consider a report on the initial proposals on	27 June 2019
4	The Council will consider all representations received and will produce draft proposals for public consultation by	22 July 2019

5	Further comments/suggestions on these proposals must be received by	31 August 2019
6	Final proposals, having regard to any comments/suggestions received will be considered by Council on	26 September 2019

- 3.6 In accordance with the timetable, public notice will be given on 1st March 2019 of the Council's intention to undertake the review and inviting preliminary comments on the existing polling arrangements.
- 3.7 Public notice will be given by advertisement on the Council's Website, at Renfrewshire House, in local libraries, and at Renfrew and Johnstone Town Halls, and maps and documents showing the current polling arrangements will be available for public inspection.
- 3.8 In addition, individual notice will be given to Councillors, community councils, Renfrewshire Access Panel and Capability Scotland, for their interest.
- 3.9 A report will be brought to Council on 27th June 2019 setting out the comments received during this initial period of consultation. Recommendations will be made for the content of a draft Polling Plan for further consultation as set in the table above.
- 3.10 A copy of the current number of electors in each existing polling district as at 1st January 2019 is attached at Appendix 2 hereto.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
4. **Legal** – As detailed in the report.
5. **Property/Assets** – The current Polling Plan involves the use of various council properties and consultation will take place with the appropriate officers as part of review.
6. **Information Technology** – None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – The premises currently used as polling places have been inspected and appropriate arrangements and/or adaptations have been made as necessary to obviate risk to staff and voters.
9. **Risk** – N/A
10. **Privacy Impact** – None
11. **Cosla Policy Position** - None

List of Background Papers - None

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