

To: Council

On: 27th June 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 A report was considered and noted at the Council Meeting of 28th February 2019. That report set out the process for conducting the next statutory review which must be concluded by January 2020 and included a timetable for that process.

1.4 This report sets out a revised timetable for the conduct of the statutory review.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Council note the revised timetable for the conduct of the statutory review.

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.

3.3 Following the report to Council of 28th February, a Notice commencing the statutory review procedure was published on 1st March 2019. That set an initial period of public consultation which closed on 1st May 2019. A significant number of responses to the consultation have been received from individuals and groups. Those responses include a number of suggestions for potential alternative polling places.

3.4 As Members will be aware, the European Parliamentary Elections were called on 15th April, with polling day being 23rd May and the count on 26th May. When the timetable for the conduct of the statutory review was set, it was not anticipated that the said elections would require to be conducted. As a result, officers have not had the opportunity of assessing the alternative polling places suggested by the consultation responses. It is therefore necessary to revise the timetable for the statutory review to allow these assessments to be made and for the Returning Officer to comment on the proposals.

3.5 The revised timetable for the conduct of the review will now 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	26 September 2019
4	The Council will consider all representations received and will produce draft proposals for public consultation by	10 October 2019
5	Further comments/suggestions on these proposals must be received by	15 November 2019

6	Final proposals, having regard to any comments/suggestions received will be considered by Council on	12 December 2019
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- 3.6 A report will be brought to the next Council on 27th September 2019 setting out the comments received during this initial period of consultation, along with the Returning Officer’s response thereto. Recommendations will be made for the content of a draft Polling Plan for further consultation as set in the table above.

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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