

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****25 October 2023****Report by Director of Business Operations and Partnerships****Statutory Review of Polling Scheme****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Council of the need to carry out a statutory review of its Polling Scheme and to ask Members to approve for consultation the draft Polling Scheme detailed in Appendix 1 and the statutory review timetable as detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. It is recommended that the Council:
  - a) Notes the requirements to undertake a Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025;
  - b) Approves the timetable relating to the Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme, as outlined in Appendix 2, with authority being delegated to the Chief Executive to make such changes to the timetable as they consider necessary;
  - c) Approves for consultation the draft Polling Scheme at Appendix 1 and authorises the Chief Executive to commence the eight-week consultation on 1 November 2023; and
  - d) Notes that a further report will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 24 April 2024, or earlier, once the consultation has ended.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), requires local authorities to divide their area into polling districts, to designate polling places for the purposes of elections and to keep those arrangements under review.
4. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 further amended the Representation of the People Act 1983 by introducing a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. This means that compulsory reviews are to commence and finish within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.
5. The Council last carried out a statutory review in 2019. In terms of the legislation, it must now carry out the compulsory statutory review between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.
6. It is therefore proposed to carry out the review in line with the timetable set out in Appendix 2 with a view to it being completed and coming into force by May 2024.

7. In terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983, local authorities are required to designate polling places for the purposes of elections, to review those arrangements within the statutory review timescale and to keep their arrangements under review.
8. The Council completed its last statutory review in 2019. The Council's practice has also been to review polling arrangements as each scheduled election approaches. In conducting its reviews, the Council must seek to ensure that:
  - (i) all electors in the constituency have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in circumstances; and
  - (ii) so far as is reasonably practical, all polling places should be accessible to all voters, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, the Council must have regard to the needs of persons with disabilities.
9. The proposed timetable for the review is outlined in Appendix 2 commencing with the publication of the notification of the review and making contact with interested parties, such as Members, Community Councils and organisations representing the disabled.
10. The Council is committed to ongoing reviews of the Scheme and to exploring suitable options for polling place locations. The Council is also committed to minimising any disruption to schools during each election process and this will be looked at continuously.
11. In relation to the Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme, East Renfrewshire Council will only review the polling districts and polling places, which already fall within the East Renfrewshire area.

## **NEW LEGISLATION**

12. The Elections Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 and introduced a series of changes to how UK elections are to be administered. Some of these changes, including the requirement to show photographic ID to vote in person, were implemented at the local government elections in England on 4 May 2023. Other measures are due to be implemented in the coming months and will apply at the next General Election. The impact of these changes is being carefully considered by officers, together with the Electoral Registration Officer and their staff, and will form part of the detailed planning for the next General Election, including ensuring there is suitable public awareness of these changes.

## **PROPOSALS**

13. It is to be noted that, subject to the confirmation of the boundary review, it is expected that once finalised, and following the upcoming consultation, the Polling Scheme for the East Renfrewshire County Constituency will be exclusive to those polling districts that are within East Renfrewshire Council's Wards.
14. The Council has previously delegated to the Chief Executive the authority to make any such amendments as may from time to time be necessary in the Polling Scheme in order to take account of any building works and/or closures in order to facilitate suitable and feasible polling arrangements.
15. Since the pandemic, the Council has utilised more schools than it previously did. This was to support social distancing and for other reasons such as greater space, parking and accessibility. The proposals put forward include continued use of schools highlighted. It is recognised that using schools will bring disruption to the education of some children and young people. For this reason, alternatives have been investigated where possible. In addition, we continue to work towards putting in place mitigating

factors to minimise disruption. This includes using parts of a school e.g. gym hall, which will allow the school to remain open, where it has been assessed and found suitable to do so. In addition, all efforts will continue to be made to synchronise polling days and school in-service days where election dates are known in advance. At all times, we will seek to minimise disruption to children, young people and families.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

16. The Council is required to receive this report in terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

17. The cost of carrying out the review relates to officer time and is being met from existing resources.

## **CONSULTATION**

18. As part of the exercise, consultation will take place for eight weeks, following the publication of the statutory notice of review on 1 November 2023.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

19. There is a legal requirement to conduct a review by January 2025 and failure to do so would mean the Council was in breach of its legal obligations. There are staffing implications associated with the conduct of the review, but it is being carried out using existing staff resources. There are implications for the scheme depending on the continuing availability of the Council premises currently in use as polling places.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

20. The Council is required to conduct a review of polling places and polling districts by 2025. The review that is being conducted takes into account future population growth, the Council's own development plans and, where possible, the concerns of parents and carers about needing to arrange alternative childcare on polling day.
21. Once the final scheme has been approved, a further review will not be required until October 2028. Further consideration will be given to any additional comments received and any alternative venues investigated. The responses to the comments will be contained in the next report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

22. It is recommended that the Council:
  - a) Notes the requirements to undertake a Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025;
  - b) Approves the timetable relating to the Statutory Review of the Polling Scheme, as outlined in Appendix 2, with authority being delegated to the Chief Executive to make such changes to the timetable as they consider necessary;
  - c) Approves for consultation the draft Polling Scheme at Appendix 1 and authorises the Chief Executive to commence the eight-week consultation on 1 November 2023; and
  - d) Notes that a further report will be presented to the Council at its meeting on 24 April 2024, or earlier, once the consultation has ended.

Legislation

Local Government (Access to Information) Act  
The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended)  
The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

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Background Papers

None

## Polling Places – East Renfrewshire by Ward

### No 1 – Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor

PD	Address	No of Stations
ES01	Mure Hall, 13 Tannoch Road, Uplawmoor, G78 4AD	1
ES02	Cross Arthurlie Primary School, Fern Drive, Barrhead, G78 1JF	3
ES03	Dalmeny Community Centre, Barnes Street, Barrhead, G78 1EH	2
ES04	St Andrew's Parish Church, 2 Ralston Road, Barrhead, G78 2QQ	3
ES05	Carlibar Primary School, Carlibar Road, Barrhead, G78 1BD	3
ES06	Auchenback Resource Centre, 64 Aurs Drive, Barrhead, G78 2LW	3

### No 2 – Newton Mearns North and Neilston

PD	Address	No of Stations
EE01	St Cadoc's Primary School, Crookfur Road, Newton Mearns, G77 6TT	3
EE02	Crookfur Primary School, Capelrig Road, Newton Mearns, G77 6LF	4
ES07	Neilston Primary School, 43 High Street, Neilston, G78 3HJ <small>(See Note 1)</small>	4

### No 3 – Giffnock and Thornliebank

PD	Address	No of Stations
EE03	Thornliebank Primary School, Main Street, Thornliebank, G46 7RW	2
EE04	Giffnock Primary School, Academy Road, Giffnock, G46 6JL	4
EE05	Braidbar Primary School, Kyle Drive, Giffnock, G46 6ES	3
EE06	OLM Primary School, Robslee Road, Thornliebank, G46 7DD	2
EE07	St Ninian's High School, Eastwood Park, Giffnock, G46 6UG	2

### No 4 – Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood

PD	Address	No of Stations
EE08	Netherlee Primary School, Clarkston Road, Netherlee, G44 3SF	4
EE09	Clarkston Hall, Clarkston Toll, Clarkston, G76 8NE	4
EE10	Williamwood Parish Church, 4 Vardar Avenue, Clarkston, G76 7QP	2
EE11	Carolside Primary School, Ashfield Road, Clarkston, G76 7TX	3
EE12	Busby Primary School, Church Road, Busby, G76 8EB	4

### No 5 – Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham

PD	Address	No of Stations
EE13	Mearns Primary School, Hunter Drive, Newton Mearns, G77 6DP	3
EE14	Broom Parish Church, Mearns Road, Newton Mearns, G77 5HN	3
EE15	Kirkhill Primary School, Kirkhill Road, Newton Mearns, G77 5RJ	4
EE16	Mearns Kirk Church Hall, Eaglesham Road, Newton Mearns, G77 5DE	3
EE17	Eaglesham Primary School, 35 Strathaven Road, Eaglesham, G76 0LF	3

Note 1 Neilston Primary School is being replaced with a new joint campus, the new name and address of which would be reflected in the Scheme, if used as a Polling Place in future.

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Public Notice given and initial comments invited	1 November 2023
Closing date for representation on current arrangements.	27 December 2023 (8 weeks)
Report on representations received and initial proposals for consideration by the Council	28 February 2024
Publication of draft proposals as approved by the Council for public consultation	8 March 2024
Conclusion of public consultation	3 May 2024
Final proposals considered by Council for adoption.	26 June 2024

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