

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

18 December 2019

REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Chief Operating Officer) (Report No. 19/366)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks the Council's views on proposed changes to the parliamentary constituency polling districts and polling places within the area of Perth and Kinross following the recent review.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA 2006) introduced a duty on all local authorities to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years.
- 1.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (ERA 2013) introduced a new provision altering the timing of compulsory reviews. The compulsory review periods are now the period of 16 months beginning with 1 October 2013 and the period of 16 months beginning with 1 October every fifth year after that. This means that all local authorities will have to conduct (and complete) a statutory review of polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.
- 1.3 Reviews of local government polling arrangements should be conducted simultaneously with a review of polling districts and polling places for UK Parliamentary elections. The aim of the review is to ensure that every elector in Perth and Kinross has such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable, and to ensure that so far as possible, the accessibility needs of persons with a disability have been considered when designating polling places.
- 1.4 The location of proposed polling districts and places is the responsibility of Perth & Kinross Council and the location of polling stations is the responsibility of the Returning Officer. However, for the purpose of this review, all aspects of the process have been undertaken jointly.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The statutory consultation period ran from 11 October to 22 November 2019, during which time the consultation document was available on the Council website. During this period any registered elector, the Returning Officer for the relevant parliamentary constituencies within the local government area, Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of the European Parliament, Members of Perth & Kinross Council and persons who

are considered to have particular expertise in relation to access to polling premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability, are able to make comment on the proposals.

- 2.2 Appendix 1 to this report details the existing polling arrangements within various polling districts and included the proposed changes that formed part of the statutory consultation.
- 2.3 During the statutory consultation period, the Council received a number of comments and these are set out on a ward by ward basis as follows.

WARD 5

- 2.4 The consultation exercise included a proposal to merge SMF5 (Ruthvenfield Primary School, Huntingtower) with SMA (Pitcairngreen Village Hall). The rationale behind this proposal is that in local government elections, SMF5 is a multi-ward polling station and this proposal would alleviate any potential voter confusion at local government elections.
- 2.5 Several representations were made from both members of the public and elected members. None of the comments received supported the proposal citing environmental and accessibility issues as the major factors.
- 2.6 Taking on board these comments, it is proposed that there is no change made to SMF5 (Ruthvenfield Primary School, Huntingtower).
- 2.7 Local elected members also suggested that consideration be given to replacing Pitcairngreen Hall as the polling station for SMA (Pitcairngreen Village Hall). An alternative location suggested was Almondbank / Tibbermore St Serf's Church. The preparations for the UK Parliamentary Election on 12 December 2019 have meant that the normal evaluation and assessment process for potential new polling stations has not been undertaken.
- 2.8 It is proposed that the evaluation of alternative polling stations for SMA (Pitcairngreen Village Hall) is undertaken in 2020 with an update provided to a future Council meeting.

WARD 10

- 2.9 Currently there are a number of voters within the Moncrieffe area who are voting at a polling station outside of their boundary. To address this, it was proposed to allocate register PLA (Moncrieffe Community Centre) within Ward 10 to PLB (Moncrieffe Church Centre).
- 2.10 A representation has been received from the SNP Perth & North Perthshire Westminster Campaign Committee and a local elected member recommending that this change not be made citing a potential impact on turnout.
- 2.11 Taking on board these comments, it is proposed that there is no change made to PLA (Moncrieffe Community Centre).

- 2.12 In order to accommodate the increase in the number of voters around the Glasgow Road area it is proposed that a new parliamentary polling district be established within the Perth Academy Scout Hall.
- 2.13 A representation was made from an elected member with regards the suitability of Perth Academy Scout Hall citing accessibility and future growth in this area. There are no obvious alternatives identified at this time. The growth within this area will be monitored and in advance of this venue reaching capacity, a further review will be undertaken and reported to Council. On that basis it is proposed that a new parliamentary district be established within Perth Academy Scout Hall.

WARD 11

- 2.14 Local elected members and the SNP Perth & North Perthshire Westminster Campaign Committee have suggested that consideration be made to identifying an alternative location for PLI (Railway Staff Club) which since May 2019 has made use of the Railway Staff Club, Feus Road, Perth citing a reduced turnout. However, the percentage turnouts for the European Elections held in 2014 (Fairfield Neighbourhood Centre) and 2019 (Railway Staff Club) are broadly comparable.
- 2.15 On that basis it is proposed that no change be made to PLI (Railway Staff Club).
- 2.16 Local elected members and the SNP Perth & North Perthshire Westminster Campaign Committee have also suggested that a number of specific addresses in Ward 11 move from PLL (Perth Gospel Hall) to PLH11 (Letham St Marks Hall). To select individual streets within a polling district area and to allocate to a different polling station is not possible. This would require moving the whole of polling district PLL to Letham St Marks Hall which does not have the capacity to take an additional two, possibly three polling stations associated with the closing of the polling place Perth Gospel Hall.
- 2.17 On that basis it is proposed that no change be made to the specific addresses in Ward 11.

WARD 12

- 2.18 Currently there are a number of voters within the Scone area who are voting at a polling station outside of their boundary. To address this, it is proposed to combine PCU (RDM Institute, Scone) with PDB (Gannochy Community Centre). No representations were made in relation to this proposal.
- 2.19 Representations have been received from John Swinney MSP, local elected members and the SNP Perth & North Perthshire Westminster Campaign Committee suggesting a change of polling place for polling district PCW (St John's RC Church Hall). This proposal was considered at the last polling place review in December 2014. At that time, it was suggested that alternative venues could be considered including North Inch Campus, Bells Sports Centre, Balhousie Castle and Balhousie Primary School.

- 2.20 Nothing material has changed since the last review. North Inch Campus, Bells Sports Centre, Balhousie Castle and Balhousie Primary School are still not considered as suitable alternatives. On that basis it is proposed that there is no change to PCW (St John's RC Church Hall).
- 2.21 In the event that the Council identifies any further changes to the list of approved polling places, these would be subject to a full risk assessment. The suitability of any new proposals would be reported to future meetings of the Council.
- 2.22 The Council also received a number of general representations in relation to the provision of temporary or "pop-up" polling stations. This has been examined in the past and has been discounted on the basis that the costs can be prohibitive and potentially not recoverable within the funding allocation. This position will be kept under review dependent upon specific circumstances.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- i) Endorse the proposals for the designation of polling districts and polling places as set out in **Appendix 1** to this report with the exceptions of SMF (Ruthvenfield Primary School, Huntingtower) and PLA (Moncrieffe Community Centre) which will be retained as polling places.
 - ii) Approve the proposal to provide an evaluation of alternative polling stations for SMA (Pitcairngreen Village Hall) to be reported to a future Council meeting.
 - iii) Continue to designate St Johns RC Church hall as the polling place for parliamentary polling district PCW.

Author(s)

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Scott Walker	Election Manager	elections@pkc.gov.uk
Christine Grant	Senior Elections & Community Council Manager	elections@pkc.gov.uk

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Jim Valentine	Depute Chief Executive	4 December 2019

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	No
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	No
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	No
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	No
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	
Consultation	
Internal	
External	
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The proposals set out in this report support the delivery of all of the priorities in the Perth & Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement 2018 to 2023.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The proposals set out in this report support the achievement of all of the objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/2023.

2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 The resource implications of this report are not yet available, but any change is unlikely to be significant.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

3.2 The proposals in this report have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcomes:

- The proposals to combine parliamentary polling districts allocated to the same parliamentary polling place comply with the relevant legislation in relation to accessibility
- In relation to the proposals not to allocate individual electors or very small groups of electors to a polling place outwith their electoral ward, it is acknowledged that some electors may experience inconvenience but there will be publicity in advance of any election/referendum to promote the availability of postal voting as an alternative to voting in person.

Legal and Governance

3.3 The legal framework for this report is contained within the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA 2006) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (ERA 2013)

Risk

3.4 There are no key risks associated with the proposals which have not been addressed elsewhere in the report.

4. Consultation

4.2 Representations were invited on any aspect of the allocated polling districts and polling places as set out in **Appendix 1** to this report and are included within the main body of the report.

5. Communication

5.1 A communications plan was included within the Project Plan for the project.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

- Representation of the People Act 1983 Schedule A1
- The Review of Polling District and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006
- Electoral Administration Act 2006
- Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (ERA 2013)

3. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Report detailing the existing polling arrangements within various polling districts and sets out revised proposals for the designation of polling districts and polling places.