

**REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND  
POLLING PLACES 2018**

**EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNTY  
CONSTITUENCY**

**REPRESENTATIONS BY RETURNING OFFICER**

# **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places East Dunbartonshire County Constituency 2018**

## **Representations by the Returning Officer**

### **1. Background to the Review**

- 1.1** East Dunbartonshire Council (“the Council”) conducted a review of its polling districts and polling places in 2013. In addition, various interim reviews have been carried out to accommodate the number and variety of electoral events since 2013 and changing circumstances across the Council area.

Since that initial review, the Council’s Primary School Improvement Programme has changed the landscape of the primary school estate and has impacted the polling places across the area. In 2016/17, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland approved changes to the Council’s Ward boundaries - 24 members reduced to 22 members, 8 multi-member wards of 3 members to 7 multi-member wards (1 x 4 members and 6 x 3 members) - which had a significant impact on the Polling Scheme. Appropriate changes to the existing polling districts’ boundaries and adjustments were made to align with the new Ward boundaries. These polling places were used in the Local Government Elections in May 2017 and the UK General Election in June 2017.

### **2. Factors in devising polling schemes**

- 2.1** In devising the polling scheme, the Electoral Commission guidance suggests that the following factors should be taken into account:-
- (a) the convenience of the situation of the polling place for local electors;
  - (b) the requirement to ensure that the polling place is accessible to voters with disabilities (statutory);
  - (c) the capacity of the polling place in terms of the number of polling stations it can accommodate;
  - (d) the general suitability of the polling place for electoral use;
  - (e) adequate parking for electors and staff; and
  - (f) suitable kitchen and toilet facilities for election staff who will be in the premises for 15 hours on polling day.

**2.2** In recent years, the Council has sought to avoid using schools wherever possible. However, in many cases, schools are still the most convenient and suitable locations for polling places. The existing list of polling places consists of 22 schools (inc 2 former school buildings), 10 private halls, 4 public halls and 1 community centre.

**2.3** Ideally a polling place should be located within the polling district which it serves and this is the case in all of the polling places within East Dunbartonshire

**2.4** All of the existing polling places for East Dunbartonshire County Constituency and the existing polling districts are listed in Appendix 1 to this paper. Details of the proposed changes to polling districts are summarised and listed for ease of reference.

### **3. Accessibility**

**3.1** The accessibility of premises used as polling places has steadily improved over the years. All the existing polling places have disabled access and any new polling place under consideration needs to be assessed for accessibility before being adopted.

### **4. The Representations**

**4.1** The representations I have made take the form of a comparative list of polling places, giving details of the proposed polling districts which poll at each polling place and the number of electors in each (including 16 and 17 year olds who are included in Scottish Local Government and Scottish Parliamentary Elections but not UK Parliamentary Elections) together with a suggested number of polling stations at each place. Thereafter, each polling place is reviewed individually and comments where applicable (see Appendix 3). A diagram of each polling place is provided which depicts the internal layout of the polling place together with details of access for disabled voters.

#### Polling Districts

**4.2** The Polling Districts listed in the Polling Scheme are currently fit for purpose and these are the building blocks that allow the successful management of the electoral events in our area. These building blocks are satisfactory for UK Parliamentary Constituencies, Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies and at Ward level for Local Government Elections. As alluded to previously, the anticipated outcome from the 6<sup>th</sup> Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies will see eligible electors across East Dunbartonshire contributing to 2 such constituencies – Dunbartonshire East and Dunbartonshire West. This is also the case for the current Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies of Strathkelvin & Bearsden and Clydebank & Milngavie.

#### Polling Places

**4.3** The current arrangement of Polling Places has worked well in the most recent electoral events and the designated places continue to satisfy the majority of the electorate. Since the elections of 2017 there have been further changes to the places used for polling – St. Joseph's Primary School, Milngavie and St. Andrew's Primary School have been re-located on the St. Andrew's site as

per the PSIP programme. In the interim, it is proposed to continue the use of the former St. Joseph's as a polling place and the newly constructed St. Nicholas Primary School on the site of the former St. Andrew's PS. The Election Team is currently examining the detail of the proposed UK Parliamentary Constituencies to facilitate suitable polling districts and places for those electors in Bearsden North who are affected by the new proposals.

#### Impact of New Housing in East Dunbartonshire

- 4.4** An assessment of the impact on the polling scheme on the number of new properties being built in East Dunbartonshire has been undertaken with the assistance of officers from the Council's Planning Section. Whilst there are a number of new housing developments planned and/or being proposed throughout East Dunbartonshire, there are only a few of significant size to have major impact on the proposed polling scheme. The Polling Places across the area can be adjusted should additional polling stations be required to accommodate the larger phased developments

#### **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 5.1** Having examined the polling districts and polling places for East Dunbartonshire, I am of the opinion that the proposed scheme is fit for purpose and that it takes due cognisance of the needs of electors and, in particular, disabled electors.
- 5.2** I welcome comments on the scheme and on these representations by local electors and interested individuals and organisations, particularly on disability and access issues.
- 5.3** I recommend that the Council adopts the contents of this report as its preferred polling scheme, subject to any improvements arising out of public representations.

**Gerry Cornes**  
**Returning Officer**  
**East Dunbartonshire County Constituency**