

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: AMENDMENT TO POLLING SCHEME – CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES FOR THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION AND UK REFERENDUM 2011**  
**Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL**  
**Date: 2 MARCH 2011**  
**Author: RETURNING OFFICER**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Members will recall the Report submitted to Council on 8 December 2010 and subsequently considered at the reconvened meeting on 17 December in relation to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2010. At that time, Members were advised that a number of issues relating to polling places had yet to be finalised and the Report was withdrawn to allow further consultation to take place, on the basis that the current polling scheme would be implemented for the Scottish Parliamentary election in May 2011, with minor polling place amendments brought to Council in March.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Report is to alert Members to the identified need to review three polling places to be used for the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary election and proposed UK Referendum on 5 May 2011 and to seek approval of the polling schemes for Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies, adjusted accordingly.

**2. PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS**

- 2.1 Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006, requires local authorities to keep under review polling districts and polling places. Members will be aware that elections staff constantly review polling places and make proposals to amend the Council's polling scheme on a temporary or permanent basis as required.
- 2.2 Following feedback from the UK Parliamentary election in May 2010, and arising from the initial stages of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, consideration has been given to reducing the number of schools used for polling purposes, focusing as a priority on Shieldhill Primary School and St Margaret's Primary School, Polmont. Alternative premises in both Shieldhill and Polmont have been identified for polling purposes. In addition, following the refurbishment of Avonbridge Community Hall, it has been suggested that the United Reformed Church Hall, Avonbridge, be removed from the polling scheme and that the Community Hall be utilised instead.

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2.3 The proposed adjustments, therefore, relate to the undernoted polling places:-

<b>Constituency and Ward</b>	<b>Polling District</b>	<b>No. of electors (as at 1/2/11)</b>	<b>Current polling place</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>
Falkirk East: Wards 7 – Falkirk South, and 9 – Upper Braes	FE750 and FE960	69 and 1,907	Shieldhill Primary School, Main Street, Shieldhill	Shieldhill Community Hall, Main Street, Shieldhill
Falkirk East: Ward 8 – Lower Braes	FE815	2,442	St Margaret's Primary School, Salmon Inn Road, Polmont	Polmont Sports Centre, Salmon Inn Road, Polmont
Falkirk East: Ward 9 – Upper Braes	LE935	580	United Reformed Church Hall, Main Street, Avonbridge	Avonbridge Community Hall, Blackstone Road, Avonbridge

- 2.4 In addition to the above changes, Members are asked to note that a static unit at the Torwood Primary School site, used as a polling place at the European Parliamentary elections in 2009 and UK Parliamentary election in 2010, will be used once again, thereby enabling local electors to vote at the same location as before. As Members will be aware, there is little, if any, alternative option within Torwood and this polling place will be kept under close scrutiny in relation to future elections. Members will be notified of any further proposed changes.
- 2.5 Members are asked to note that the above changes to polling places, once confirmed, will be notified to all electors within the polling districts concerned by way of the poll card issued by the Electoral Registration Officer on behalf of myself as Returning Officer. If considered necessary, a separate letter of notification of change will be issued to each elector. In addition, the changes to polling places will be published on the Council's website. Additional and enhanced signage will be provided to assist electors on polling day, as required.
- 2.6 Plans indicating the locations of the existing and proposed polling places are attached at Appendix 1 hereto.
- 2.7 The polling schemes for Falkirk East, amended to reflect the proposed changes, and Falkirk West are attached at Appendix 2 hereto, for Members' approval. Members are reminded that the first digit contained within the Polling District reference indicates the Ward number, eg LE100 indicates Ward 1, FW325 indicates Ward 3, etc. Members are also asked to note that, where a polling district (register) is divided across two or more polling stations, the total electorate per polling place/polling district is indicated at the first polling station within the premises. The accurate electorate per polling station will be updated to reflect the register being used on polling day, once confirmed by the Electoral Registration Officer as part of the electoral planning process.

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### **3. FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 A charge will be made for the use of the unit at Torwood Primary School site. The cost in 2010 was £607 plus VAT and it is anticipated that the charge in 2011 will be similar. This will include the delivery and uplift of the unit, as well as provision of a generator and separate toilet facility.
- 3.2 There will be a minimal fee payable for the use of Avonbridge and Shieldhill Community Halls. This has not yet been confirmed but is expected to be in the region of £100, in line with payments made for the use of similar premises for polling purposes in the Falkirk Council area.
- 3.3 All proposed premises are fully compliant with Disability Discrimination legislative requirements.

### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with local Members and electors as part of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2010. The Police and the Electoral Registration Officer have been verbally notified of the proposed changes and the details will be posted on the Council's website.
- 4.2 In addition, Members are asked to note that the review of all polling places will be completed following the election and referendum in May 2011, with a view to a revised polling scheme being prepared in advance of the local government elections in May 2012. Elected Members, and all other relevant bodies, will be consulted on existing and proposed polling places as part of that process.

### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Members are requested to:-**

- (1) note the terms of the Report; and
- (2) approve the adjustments to the polling scheme detailed in Paragraph 2.3 of this Report and the publicising of the changes, with immediate implementation for polling purposes at the Scottish Parliamentary election and proposed UK referendum on 5 May 2011.

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**Returning Officer**

**Date: 15 February 2011**

**Contact Officer: Dale Robb, ext 6111**

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Report to Falkirk Council on 8 and 17 December 2010 – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2010.
- 2 Report to Falkirk Council on 29 April 2009 – Amendment to Polling Scheme – Changes to Polling Places for European Parliamentary Election – 4 June 2009.
- 3 Report to Falkirk Council on 5 December 2007 – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.