

10am, Thursday, 28 April 2016

Urgent Revisions to Polling Places

Item number	8.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

Executive Summary

Council are asked to note an urgent decision taken under paragraph A4 of the Council's committee terms of reference and delegated functions to designate revised Polling Places for the Polling Districts SWP02E, SWP02G, SE16D and SE17L. The previously identified venues have become unavailable at short notice.

Links

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Council Priorities	CO24, CO25
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Urgent Revision to Polling Places

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Council notes that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Lord Provost, as the Convener of the City of Edinburgh Council, has designated three new Polling Places as a matter of urgency to be used at the Scottish Parliament Election on 5 May 2016 and the EU Referendum on 23 June 2016.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility under the Representation of the People Act (1983) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act (2013) to designate a Polling Place for each Polling District in the wards that make up the council area.
- 2.2 Council agreed a set of Polling Districts and Places for the City on 12 December 2013, following a consultation process and review of provision.

3. Main report

- 3.1 Two of the Polling Places designated by Council in the Pentlands Hills Ward / Edinburgh Pentlands constituency have become unavailable for use in the imminent electoral events of 2016 due to building works.
- 3.2 Longstone Community Education Centre, the Polling Place for district SWP02E will be unavailable for both the Scottish Parliament Election on 5 May 2016 and the EU Referendum on 23 June 2016. Currie Youth Club, the Polling Place for district SWP02G will be unavailable for the EU Referendum, although it is free for the Scottish Parliament Election.
- 3.3 Following a review of facilities in the SWP02E District Kingsknowe Golf Club has been identified as an appropriate alternative facility. The venue is within the Polling District, is accessible to disabled voters and the owners are enthusiastic about its use for polling.
- 3.4 Similarly, Currie Library has been identified as an appropriate alternative for the SWP02G District. It is close to the Youth Club, minimising disruption to voters, has good access and library management see the move as an opportunity to promote their services to local residents.
- 3.5 Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre is designated as the Polling Place for Polling Districts SE16D and SE17L in the Edinburgh Eastern Constituency of the Scottish Parliament. The Centre is currently subject to closure as a precaution following the

structural issues identified in areas of the school estate managed by Edinburgh Schools Partnership.

- 3.6 The structural assessment of the Centre may reveal no safety concerns. However an immediate transfer to an alternative polling venue will remove uncertainty in election planning and allow surveyors to focus attention on the schools, while freeing the Centre and local schools as contingency venues for any decanted pupils. Following a review of local facilities Moredun Library has been identified as a suitable alternative Polling Place.
- 3.7 Designation of Polling Places for these districts was needed as a matter of urgency to facilitate polling arrangements for the Scottish Parliament Election of 5 May and the EU Referendum of 23 June. In each case, Ward councillors have been consulted regarding the proposed new venues and are supportive of the temporary relocation.
- 3.8 Paragraph A4 of the Council's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions provides that if a decision which would normally be made by the Council requires to be made urgently between meetings of the Council, the Chief Executive, may take action, subject to the matter being reported to the next meeting of the Council.
- 3.9 The Chief Executive in consultation with the Lord Provost, as the Convener of the City of Edinburgh Council, has agreed that:
 - 3.9.1 Kingsknowe Golf Club be designated as the Polling Place for the SWP02E Polling District for the 5 May 2016 Scottish Parliament Election and the 23 June 2016 EU Referendum;
 - 3.9.2 Currie Library be designated as the Polling Place for the SWP02G Polling District for the 23 June 2016 EU Referendum; and
 - 3.9.3 Moredun Library be designated as the Polling Place for the Polling Districts SE16D and SE17L for the 5 May 2016 Scottish Parliament Election and the 23 June 2016 EU Referendum.
- 3.10 All affected electors have been informed of the changes by a notice posted to each household. Signage will also be erected on the former Polling Places directing electors to the new venues.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The aim in designating Polling Places is to provide optimal facilities to promote turnout in electoral events. The polling arrangements proposed should support participation in the political process. Turnout will be reviewed after these polls to assess any impact of the change in venue.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 Costs associated with these transfers will be included in the overall costs of the electoral events.

- 5.2 The hire of Polling Places for the use at electoral events is a major cost element at each poll. For Parliamentary and Referendum polls these costs are recovered from Government.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility under the Representation of the People Act (1983) and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act (2013) to designate an appropriate Polling Place for each Polling District in the wards that make up the council area.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The local authority has a duty to review the accessibility of all Polling Places to disabled voters and to ensure that each is accessible to disabled voters as far as is reasonable and practicable.
- 7.2 The Kingsknowe Golf Club, Currie Library and Moredun Library have been assessed to as appropriately accessible either as they are or with minor reasonable adjustments such as access ramps.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is no direct sustainability impact as a result of this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Due to the urgency of these changes, opportunities for public consultation have been limited. There has been consultation with elected members and council officers involved in the delivery of elections and local services.
- 9.2 Following these electoral events the experience of using these two venues will be assessed and any lessons learnt will be considered and incorporated into future planning.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Electoral Commission Guidance On Polling Place Reviews](#)

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P33
Council Priorities	CO24, CO25
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Appendices	None