

10am, Thursday, 16 March 2017

## Urgent Revisions to Polling Places

Item number 8.3  
Report number  
Executive/routine  
Wards

### Executive Summary

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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 WW01C, NC05I and NC11A. The previously designated venues have become unavailable at short notice due to building works.

### Links

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Coalition Pledges [P33](#)  
Council Priorities  
Single Outcome Agreement [SO4](#)

## Urgent Revision to Polling Places

### 1. Recommendations

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- 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 Local Government Elections to the City of Edinburgh Council on 4 May 2017.

### 2. Background

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- 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 Following the recent review of councillor numbers and the associated revisions to ward boundaries Council agreed a new set of Polling Places for the city at their meeting on 24 November 2016.

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 Three of the Polling Places recently designated by Council have become unavailable for use in the imminent City of Edinburgh Council elections due to building works.
- 3.2 These Places are Dalmeny Parish Church Hall (district WW01C in the Almond Ward), Bellevue Chapel (district NC05I in the Inverleith Ward) and The Roxburghe Hotel (district NC11A in the City Centre Ward). All are subject to building works which will make the venue unsuitable for use in polling on 4 May 2017.
- 3.3 Following a review of local facilities suitable alternative polling places have been identified for each of these Polling Places. These would be, respectively, Dalmeny Primary School, Broughton St. Mary's Parish Church and The Principal Edinburgh (formerly The George Hotel).
- 3.4 These three venues have been surveyed, are accessible to voters, have appropriate facilities, are suitably located and are easily recognised, prominent local buildings.
- 3.5 Designation of replacement Polling Places for these districts was needed as a matter of urgency outwith the normal decision processes of the Council due to the production schedules for poll cards. Data for poll cards needs to be passed to the printer on 2 March 2017 to allow poll cards to be posted on 14 March. This data includes the location of the elector's polling place.

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive in consultation with the Lord Provost, as the Convener of the City of Edinburgh Council, has agreed that:
- 3.7.1 Dalmeny Primary School be designated as the Polling Place for the WW01C Polling District for the 4 May 2017 Scottish Local Government Elections to the City of Edinburgh Council;
- 3.7.2 Broughton St. Mary's Parish Church be designated as the Polling Place for the NC05I Polling District for the 4 May 2017 Scottish Local Government Elections to the City of Edinburgh Council; and
- 3.7.3 The Principal Edinburgh be designated as the Polling Place for the NC11A Polling District for the 4 May 2017 Scottish Local Government Elections to the City of Edinburgh Council.
- 3.8 Relevant ward councillors have been consulted with respect to these proposals and have been supportive.
- 3.9 The entire Primary School estate will be closed to pupils on 4 May 2017 for an in-service training day so the use of Dalmeny Primary will not introduce any additional disruption for pupils, parents or carers.
- 3.10 The poll cards will highlight to electors that they should attend a new Polling Place for this election. This will be supported by communications messages to electors across the city to encourage them to check their poll cards closely for these polls as due to the revised ward boundaries the polling locations for a number of voters will have changed.
- 3.11 The Polling Places will revert to those agreed in November 2016 for subsequent polls assuming that building work is completed.

#### **4. Measures of success**

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- 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**

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- 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 the City of Edinburgh Council elections these costs fall wholly to the Council.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 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**

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- 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 Dalmeny Primary School, Broughton St. Mary's Parish Church and The Principal Edinburgh (formerly The George Hotel) have been as appropriately accessible either as they are or with minor reasonable adjustments such as the provision of access ramps.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 Due to the urgency of these changes, opportunities for public consultation have been limited. There has been some 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 venues will be assessed and any lessons learnt will be considered and incorporated into future planning.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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

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## 11. Links

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<b>Coalition Pledges</b>	P33 Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used
<b>Council Priorities</b>	
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO4 Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
<b>Appendices</b>	None