

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**1 May 2019****Report by Chief Executive****European Elections - Changes to Polling Places****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise the Council of changes to 2 polling places at the forthcoming European elections due to unavailability of the approved polling places.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Council notes:-
- (a) the use of Broom Parish Church and the Lygates Building as replacements for Crookfur Pavilion and Mearns Parish Church Hall respectively at the forthcoming European Parliament elections; and
 - (b) that the changes have been made by the Chief Executive under the delegated powers granted by the Council in February 2014.

BACKGROUND

3. In terms of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) local authorities are required to divide their area into polling districts (sub-divisions of electoral wards) for the purposes of UK parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts and keep them under review.
4. The last full review took place in East Renfrewshire in 2013/14 at which time there were no changes made to the scheme previously approved in 2010. A number of minor polling district boundary changes were made in advance of the local elections in 2017, to take account of the reduction in the number of Council wards from 6 to 5.
5. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced provisions which require councils to conduct a review of their polling scheme (that is the current polling districts and polling places) at any time in the period of 16 months beginning 1 October 2013 and within the 16 month period every 5 years thereafter.

REPORT

6. A review of the current scheme is currently underway with draft proposals to be submitted to the Council in June. As part of the review and taking account of the uncertainty at the time around possible participation in the European elections, the election team carried out an exercise to establish if all existing polling places would be available in the event an election was called. This exercise established that 2 polling places, Crookfur Pavilion, and Mearns Parish Church Hall, both in Ward 5, would be unavailable; Crookfur Pavilion due to its closure and imminent demolition, and Mearns Parish Church Hall due to refurbishment.

7. An exercise was carried out to identify potential alternatives within the area. Due to either unsuitability or restrictions on use by third parties this was challenging. However 2 alternatives have been identified.

8. The alternative identified for Crookfur Pavilion is Broom Parish Church. Contact was made with the Church Minister who has indicated he is happy for the Church to be used as a polling place, not only for the coming contest but in any future contests.

9. The alternative identified for Mearns Parish Church Hall is the Lygates Building on Ayr Road. This building is currently leased to the Council but is not in use. It is acknowledged that the alternative is not as suitable as the current polling place, both in terms of its location and also lack of parking other than in the shopping centre car park, but its use is intended to be a one off.

10. When the Council approved the current polling scheme in February 2014, it agreed to grant delegated powers to the Chief Executive to identify alternative polling places in the event any of the polling places in the scheme became available for any reason. The decision to use Broom Parish Church and the Lygates Building has been taken in terms of the delegated powers granted.

RECOMMENDATION

11. That the Council notes:-

- (a) the use of Broom Parish Church and the Lygates Building as replacements for Crookfur Pavilion and Mearns Parish Church Hall respectively at the forthcoming European Parliament elections; and
- (b) that the changes have been made by the Chief Executive under the delegated powers granted by the Council in February 2014.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act

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Background papers

None