

Report to Council

**Agenda
Item:**

15(iv)

Meeting Date: 6 January 2015
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: Yes: Recorded in the Notice Ref: KD.27/14
Within Policy and Budget Framework
Public / Private Public

Title: REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS
Report of: Director of Governance
Report Number: GD.02/15

Purpose / Summary:

This report presents the results of the annual review of polling arrangements and makes recommendations in respect of existing arrangements. A copy of Report GD.58/14 which was considered by the Executive at their meeting on 15 December 2014 and the recommendations of the Executive arising from those considerations are attached.

Recommendations:

See Minute Extract attached.

I Dixon

Electoral Services Officer

Tracking

Executive:	15 December 2014
Overview and Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	6 January 2015

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.4

Meeting Date: 15 December 2014
 Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
 Key Decision: Yes: Recorded in the Notice Ref: KD.27/14
 Within Policy and Budget Framework
 Public / Private Public

Title: REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS
 Report of: Director of Governance
 Report Number: GD.58/14

Purpose / Summary:

This Report presents the results of the annual review of polling arrangements and makes recommendations for changes to existing arrangements as appropriate. Responsibility for designating polling places lies with the full Council. This report is presented to the Executive for information before submission to the Council meeting on 6th January 2015.

Recommendations:

(See over)

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	6 January 2015

It is recommended that:

1. No changes be made to current polling district boundaries at this time but that the position with regard to development in the polling districts itemised in paras 34 and 35 be kept under review.(para 37)
2. It is recommended that the polling arrangements in the following wards remain unchanged (para 39)

**Belle Vue
Belah
Burgh
Botcherby
Castle
Currock**

**Denton Holme
Great Corby & Geltsdale
Harraby
Hayton
Irthing**

**Lyne
St. Aidans
Stanwix Rural
Upperby
Yewdale**

3. It is recommended that the new Community Centre at Wetheral be used as a replacement polling station for polling district RE. (para 46)
4. It is recommended that the new Parish Centre at St. Augustines be used as the replacement polling station for polling district BD.(para 49)
5. It is recommended that given the suitability of the current polling station location and the timescales for completion of residential developments to the north of the town that the current polling arrangements for Longtown remain unchanged but that the situation be reviewed in future years. (para 53)
6. It is recommended that the current polling arrangements for voters in the Kirkandrews on Esk Parish (PE3) be continued (para 56)
7. It is recommended that the Irthing Centre continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PKA (para 58)
8. It is recommended that the Moot Hall continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PK (para 61)
9. It is recommended that a portable cabin be sited in polling district KC and be the designated polling place for polling district KC (para 64)

- 10 It is recommended that subject to the approval of the St. Cuthbert Without Parish Council a portable cabin be sited on Blackwell Common where it fronts on to Low Moor Avenue and be the designated polling place for polling district OF. (para 66)
- 11 Officers continue to monitor the use of portable cabins as polling stations and continue to investigate potential alternatives. It be further recommended that Officers discuss with the supplier the use of a number of self contained units and improved units with a wider door as detailed in paragraph 24 above at a number of polling station locations where portable cabins are currently used.
12. The Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with relevant Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the City Council elections if the usual premises prove to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.(para 68)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council has a statutory duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide its area into polling districts, to designate a polling place for each district and to keep both polling districts and polling places under review. The Directorate Plan provides for an annual polling review to be carried out and it has been the practice in previous years to review the arrangements in those wards having local elections in the following May.
2. The Electoral Administration Act 2006, placed a duty on the City Council to carry out a full review of all parliamentary polling districts and polling places in the Council's area during 2007 and every four years thereafter. The City Council carried out a full review in 2013/2014. Particular polling districts or places may however be reviewed at any time. As the same polling places are used at local elections, any changes arising from the review will be implemented at the earliest local or parliamentary election in the ward concerned.
3. Members will be aware that a number of separate and unconnected reviews of electoral arrangements have been undertaken over the last few years including the Review of the Cumbria County Council, carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
4. The City Council in April 2011 also requested the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out an electoral review of current arrangements with a view to securing a significant reduction in the number of Councillors. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England indicated, at that time, that due to the number of reviews currently on going or planned such reviews had to be prioritised and, as Carlisle did not meet the further electoral review criteria, any review of the City Council electoral arrangements would not be carried out in the near future.
5. All City Councillors and all County Councillors serving Electoral Districts in the Carlisle City Council area have been consulted on the polling arrangements for their particular wards/ divisions, the two local M.P's and persons appointed as Election Agents in recent elections have also been consulted. The views of the Carlisle Access Group were also sought on polling arrangements and this is referred to in more detail in paragraph 12.
6. The Council has a duty to consult the Returning Officer of every parliamentary constituency in the Council's area on the arrangements. The Returning Officer for the Penrith and the Border constituency, which currently includes all rural wards except Burgh, Dalston and Wetheral, commented that he had no objection to the use of any polling stations for the purpose of an election and as far as he was aware considered them to be suitable having regard to the factors included in the review criteria. (Copy letter attached as Appendix 2)
7. The current polling places and electorate are listed in Appendix 1 and these locations have been reviewed in the light of any representations and comments received.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

- 8 In exercising its duty to keep polling districts and places under review, the 1983 Act requires Councils to seek to ensure that all electors have "such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances ". Each parish should be a separate polling district. 'Polling place' is not defined in the Act but it refers to the building or area in which the polling station is situated.

ACCESS FOR DISABLED VOTERS

9. The Act also says that a Council must "seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled". The effect of this requirement is that a building should not be designated as a polling place if the only means of access to any polling station situated in it would be by means of steps, when another more suitable building is available in the polling district. However, a building would not be a more suitable polling place if it is so far away from most of the electors in the area as to be inconvenient for them to reach it.
10. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 it is unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person. Discrimination includes refusing to provide any service to disabled people that it provides to non-disabled members of the public or providing a worse standard of service to disabled people than it provides to non-disabled people. Service providers have had to change practices, policies and procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service. Since October 2004 service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments to their buildings to overcome physical barriers to access.
11. With the exception of portable cabins, the majority of polling places are accessible to disabled voters and where there have been particular difficulties, temporary access ramps have been installed. Polling compartments specifically designed for voters in wheelchairs have also been provided. In addition, any disabled voter is entitled to assistance from the Presiding Officer or may be helped by a companion. Large versions of ballot papers are displayed in every polling station and devices are provided to assist blind or partially sighted voters to cast their own vote. Voters may also elect to cast their vote by post if they feel that this would be more convenient than attending a polling station.
12. The Access Group have been consulted on the review. The group are satisfied that no action is required currently but if any changes in polling station locations require it the Group will be happy to carry out an audit of a new polling station location for public access.
- 13 Members may recall that the Access Group have in past years visited polling stations which were being used for the first time to check on the suitability of the building for use by disabled voters. It is hoped that this arrangement can be continued to assess buildings which are used as polling stations for the first time in the future.

FREE USE OF ROOMS

14. In addition to free use of school premises, described in paragraph 29 below, any room the expense of which is payable out of any rate may also be used free of charge. This would apply to a room in a local authority building e.g. a Community Centre.

DUTIES OF RETURNING OFFICER

15. It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to provide sufficient polling stations within each polling place and to allocate electors to the stations as he thinks most convenient. One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room. The Returning Officer also has a duty to appoint the polling staff and provide the necessary equipment.

REVIEW CRITERIA

16. Apart from the requirements outlined above, there are no specific statutory criteria for determining the suitability of premises for election purposes although the Electoral Commission did issue directions in relation to the arrangements for the Referendum carried out in May 2011 that there should be no more than 2500 electors allocated to any polling station.
17. The following factors have also been taken into account at previous reviews:
 - ◆ the convenience of the location within the polling district for the majority of electors including potential barriers such as major roads, rivers and railway lines.
 - ◆ extent of parking provision
 - ◆ internal size and layout of the premises having regard to the number of voters allotted to the polling station(s)
 - ◆ lighting and heating
 - ◆ proximity to public transport
 - ◆ cost (where there is a choice between similar premises)
18. The suitability of polling places are considered according to these criteria and taking into account the availability of alternative premises. An electorate of about 1000 - 1250 has previously been considered to be a manageable number per polling station at a parliamentary election but the number of voters to be allocated to any particular polling place will have regard to the distribution and density of households within the Ward concerned. Whilst the continuing rise in the number of electors voting by post means that the total number of electors allocated to individual polling stations could be increased because a decreasing proportion are voting in person it is considered that the Council should be wary of potential problems which might arise.

19. Members will recall the coverage in the National Media of the Parliamentary elections held on 6 May 2010 relating to problems with voting at polling stations in some areas of the country. The problems related to queues forming at stations and voters being unable to vote before the close of poll at 10pm. The size of the electorate assigned to individual polling stations and the number of staff allocated to stations were cited as contributory factors to the problems which arose. (In some of the polling stations where problems occurred the electorate entitled to vote at those stations was in excess of 4000 voters.)
20. In the Carlisle area the stations at Yewdale Community Centre, the Stanwix Community Centre and the Moot Hall Brampton have the most electors allocated. These stations have approximately 2300 voters allocated. All 3 are double polling stations with 2 teams of staff on duty at the stations. Whilst there have been no incidents in Carlisle of voters queuing and being unable to cast their votes at 10pm it is considered prudent to maintain the current split for the allocation of electors to polling stations in the Carlisle area. Indeed the rules have now been changed as a result of the problems experienced in 2010 in that any voter who is in the queue at a polling station at 10pm will be issued with a ballot paper. Officers will however continue to study any reports that are produced relating to issues arising nationally from previous elections and will take on board any recommendations or suggestions for improvement.

MOBILE POLLING STATIONS

21. As previously mentioned it is not possible in every polling area to locate a polling station in a permanent building. Where no suitable permanent buildings are available, mobile stations are used instead. Portable cabins, however, are much less satisfactory than permanent premises due to space limitations and lack of facilities. They are also difficult to staff and equip. Units are hired from a commercial supplier and guarantee of delivery is an important consideration, particularly in the event of an election being called at short notice. General concerns regarding the use of mobile stations have been raised in previous reviews by members of the Council however despite efforts of Members and officers it has not been possible to identify alternative venues to host polling stations in place of mobile stations. Indeed additional portable cabins have had to be used in elections held in recent years.
22. The Council's Access Officer has been consulted on the use of portable cabins and has recommended that a portable ramp should be provided with each cabin so that if ramped access is required it can be facilitated and secondly that consideration should also be given to the siting of the portable cabin so that where possible the gradient of any ramp used can be managed.
23. Discussions have been held with the supplier of the portable cabins with regard to concerns over the accessibility of, and the facilities in, the cabins and their location / siting, with a view to providing level access portable cabins wherever this is possible.

24. The supplier is now able to supply a limited number of units that incorporate a 1000mm door, disabled access, toilet and solar powered electricity with a number of such units being used in recent elections. The supplier has further indicated that he has commenced a programme of fitting disabled access doors ie 1000mm wide to any office units purchased in future which will also be able to be supplied with disabled ramps. It should however be noted that because of site conditions, gradients and space that the above units would not be suitable for all locations where portable cabins are currently used as polling stations.
25. Officers have as part of this review investigated possible alternatives to portable cabins used as polling stations and, whilst it has not been possible in this review to recommend changes in respect of sites where portable cabins are currently used, Officers will continue to investigate potential alternatives.
26. As an outcome of this review it is recommended that Officers continue to monitor the use of portable cabins as polling stations and further investigate potential alternatives.

USE OF HOUSES

27. Following an earlier review, the Council agreed that no existing polling place should be replaced with a portable cabin unless the premises concerned becomes unavailable and there is no suitable alternative. It was also agreed that, where appropriate, private houses and vacant Council property be used as alternatives to mobile stations, on the following basis:
 - ◆ The property is in a convenient location for the majority of electors in the polling district concerned;
 - ◆ There is sufficient time for due notice of the change in station to be given to electors and candidates;
 - ◆ Signs are erected to show the changed location;
 - ◆ The condition of the property is satisfactory.
28. Empty Council houses were used at previous elections in a number of wards and this practice continued following the transfer of the housing stock to Carlisle Housing Association, although they were under no statutory obligation to make their properties available. The Association, however, is no longer able to let their properties be used for election purposes due to the need to minimise the length of time properties are vacant between lettings.

USE OF SCHOOLS

29. The 1983 Act also provides for the use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll or the counting of the votes, of "a room in a school maintained or assisted by a

local education authority or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament”, subject to making good any damage and defraying any expenses. These provisions also apply to grant maintained schools. There is no requirement that a school must close when part of it is being used as a polling station, but some do so because of practical difficulties in staying open or on security grounds.

30. Closure for elections, however, can be disruptive to the school timetable and inconvenient for working parents. In response to requests from school governing bodies and representations from the Local Education Authority, the number of schools used as polling places has been reduced in recent years and only eight schools in the Council's area are now used as polling venues.

REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES AND POLLING DISTRICTS

31. As part of the current review Officers have taken the opportunity to look ahead at the possible impact of future residential developments on polling districts and polling district boundaries.
32. Planning Services have provided details of outstanding planning permissions for residential developments within the City Council's area and outline permissions. There are a number of potential developments in the City with outstanding or outline permissions for 50 properties and above as set out below. In forecasting the potential impacts of developments on electoral numbers the usual formula used is 1.8 electors per unit. Using that formula to forecast the impact of major developments within the City on current electoral registers for that area gives the following position.
 - (MC currently 1289 on roll) – Development at Thomlinson Avenue (201 Units, potentially 360 additional electors)
 - (MD currently 693 on roll – Development at Dalton Avenue (37 Units potentially 60 additional electors)
 - (HC currently 1049 on roll) - Development at Westmorland Street former Penguin Factory (37 Units), land at Rome Street (48 Units), potentially 150 additional electors)
 - (HD currently 830 on roll) – Outline permission United Utilities Depot Nelson Street (103 Units potentially 180 additional electors)
 - Harraby (EA currently 1133 on roll) –former Dairy Harraby Green Business Park (96 Units potentially 175 additional electors)
 - Dalston (OF currently 468 on roll) - Hammonds Pond (318 Units potentially 570 additional electors)

- Dalston (OA currently 1777 on roll) – Townhead Road (120 Units potentially 215 additional electors)
- Morton / Dalston (The majority of Units will be in the Cummersdale District of the Dalston Ward OC currently 379 on roll) – Outline permission for Development on land at South Morton bounded by Wigton Road (825 Units potentially 1480 additional electors) Development at West of Wigton Road (103 Units potentially 185 electors) Development at Peter Lane / Dalston Road (256 Units potentially 460 additional electors)
- Longtown (PE2 currently 882 on roll) – Former Sawmill site Netherby Road Longtown (74 Units potentially 130 additional electors)
- Stanwix Rural (PAG1 currently 123 on roll) Development at Crindledyke (825 Units potentially 1480 additional electors)

- 33 As indicated earlier in the report the range which the Council have accepted in the past as a manageable number of electors per register is 1000 – 1250 although this number is considerably less than the number indicated in the Commission Direction for the referendum.
34. The figures above indicate that if the developments set out above are fully built then some realignment of the register for Belle Vue (Districts MA and MC), Dalston (Districts OA and OC), Denton Holme (District HC), Harraby (District EA), Morton (District KC) and Stanwix Rural (District PAG1). However, as the timescales for the above developments anticipate that these major developments will be progressed over a number of years, it is suggested that the position be noted at the present time and that no changes are made to polling district boundaries at this time.
35. The County Councillor for Longtown has suggested that consideration could be given to creating a further polling district to serve electors in the north end of Longtown to cater for existing electors and further electors moving to potential new developments at the north end of Longtown. This is dealt with in later paragraphs.
- 36 No further representations have been received during this review with regard to polling district boundaries in the City Council area.
- 37 Whilst noting the position on the potential impact of future developments as set out above, it is considered that the polling district boundaries currently in place are an acceptable arrangement. In the light of this it is recommended that no changes be made to current polling district boundaries at this time but that the position with regard to development in the polling district itemised in paras 34 and 35 above be kept under review.
38. The large majority of polling places are satisfactory and have remained unchanged for many years. Choice of suitable buildings is limited and in most cases there is no alternative to the present arrangements. Change is therefore only considered where the current premises are no longer available or satisfactory, or representations have been received in respect of particular buildings.

39. In the absence of representations in respect of any of the following wards, it is recommended that the polling arrangements in the following wards remain unchanged:

**Belle Vue
Belah
Burgh
Botcherby
Castle
Currock**

**Denton Holme
Great Corby & Geltsdale
Harraby
Hayton
Irthing**

**Lyne
St. Aidans
Stanwix Rural
Upperby
Yewdale**

Suggested changes in Wetheral, Stanwix Urban, Longtown & Rockcliffe, Brampton, Morton and Dalston wards are discussed below

WETHERAL WARD

- 40 The village hall in Wetheral is the designated polling place for over 1050 electors in district RE. The village hall has now closed and has been sold. It is expected that it will be redeveloped for housing purposes and is therefore no longer available for use as a polling place.
- 41 The village hall has been replaced by a new community centre which has been built next to the playing field on the road from Wetheral to Cumwhinton. This is a little further from the centre of the village than the old village hall. The new centre was opened at the end of October 2014.
- 42 The booking contact of the new centre has confirmed that the centre would be available for use as a polling station should the City Council agree that it would be a suitable replacement.
- 43 If the new centre was not thought to be convenient for voters it has been suggested that a portable cabin could be used and sited on the village green close to the village shop.
- 44 It is felt that whilst the site of the new community centre is on the edge of the village it is not so far removed from the former village hall that would create problems. It is also considered that the new site would have considerably improved car parking arrangements and much improved access for disabled and elderly voters.
- 45 With regard to the suggestion that a portable cabin sited on the village green be used as a polling station this is not felt to be a suitable solution given the comments earlier in the report regarding the use of portable cabins.
- 46 In view of the above it is recommended that the new Community Centre at Wetheral be used as a replacement polling station for polling district RE.

STANWIX URBAN WARD

47. The St. Augustines Parish Centre has been the designated polling place for approximately 1050 electors in polling district BD. The former Parish Centre building has been demolished and redeveloped for residential use. The Parish Centre is now attached to the St Augustines Church rather than being a standalone building. As part of the consultation a query was raised as to whether it was felt that the Parish Centre was an appropriate venue in that it was attached to the Church rather than being a standalone building it was further suggested that the new medical centre on the former Belah School site at Eden Street could be used or alternatively a portable cabin could be used in the Eden Street car park.
- 48 Whilst the new Parish Centre is attached to the Church building and is accessed through the same door the Parish Centre is in a different room from the church. There are a number of polling stations throughout the City Council area that are located in churches or rooms attached to Churches. As similar arrangements work well in other areas of the City the St. Augustines Parish Centre is felt to be an appropriate location for a polling station.
- 49 In view of the above it is recommended that the new Parish Centre at St. Augustines be used as the replacement polling station for polling district BD.

LONGTOWN WARD

50. The Longtown Community Centre is the designated polling station for approximately 1300 voters in polling district PE1, PE2, PE3 and PE4. There are two polling stations in the building catering for just over 650 electors in each polling station. The County Councillor for Longtown has suggested that a further polling place could be created to serve existing voters at the north end of Longtown and potential future voters from anticipated developments at the north end of Longtown. It was further suggested that the Arthuret Parish Rooms could be a suitable location for an additional polling station.
- 51 The current polling arrangements have worked satisfactorily for a number of years and the Longtown Community Centre is a good location with good access and facilities for voters. There is also off road car parking provision at the Centre.
- 52 There are a number of potential residential developments in Longtown which could impact on the number of electors in the different polling districts in the future. There is an application for residential development on part of the Lochinvar School site and a site at the north end of Longtown has been allocated for residential development over a 15 year period as part of the Local Plan. The timetable for those developments is however not clear at the present time and it may be a number of years until the developments are complete.
- 53 It is therefore recommended that given the suitability of the current polling station location and the timescales for completion of residential developments to the north

of the town that the current polling arrangements for Longtown remain unchanged but that the situation be reviewed in future years.

- 54 The County Councillor has also requested that the provision for electors in Kirkandrews on Esk Parish be reviewed in view of the fact that the Parish lies in a segment between the A7 and the A6071.
- 55 The electors in the Kirkandrews on Esk Parish are in polling district PE3 (referred to above) There are currently 125 electors in this polling district with the electors being dispersed over a wide area without any main cluster of dwellings. Longtown is the natural focus for these properties and it is suggested that the current polling arrangements for voters in the Kirkandrews on Esk Parish be continued.
- 56 It is recommended that the current polling arrangements for voters in the Kirkandrews on Esk Parish (PE3) be continued

BRAMPTON WARD

- 57. The Irthing Centre is currently the designated polling station for approximately 1250 electors in polling district PKA. A local member raised an issue regarding the impact of development that was taking place at the Irthing Centre site. The manager at the Irthing Centre has confirmed that the development does not impact upon the rooms used for elections in the Irthing Centre or access to the Centre.
- 58 In the light of this it is recommended that the Irthing Centre continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PKA
- 59 The Moot Hall is currently the designated polling station (double station) for approximately 2300 voters in polling district PK. The room used in the Moot Hall is the same room that is used by the Tourist Information Centre. There was a request for the Tourist Information Centre to remain open during the election with the same room being shared between elections and the Tourist Information Centre.
- 60 It is considered that such an arrangement would not ensure that voters were able to cast their vote in private and with due secrecy. Following further discussions with the Tourist Information Centre it has been agreed that the Centre will remain closed on election day and the current arrangements for the Moot Hall to be the designated polling station for polling district PK be continued.
- 61 In the light of this it is recommended that the Moot Hall continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PK

MORTON WARD

- 62. The polling place for approximately 1350 electors in polling district KC was for a number of years at the St. Edmund's Chapel on Newlaithes Avenue. The Chapel closed and the Council agreed that a portable cabin should be sited on the Car Park at the Border Terrier Public House and used as a polling station for polling district KC. The Border Terrier has now been sold. It is anticipated that it will be developed for

residential purposes and will therefore be no longer available for use as a site for a polling station.

- 63 Officers, with the help of local Ward Members, have sought to identify a suitable alternative polling place but it has not been possible to identify a permanent building in the area as a suitable polling place and efforts are being made to identify a suitable site to place a portable cabin within polling district KC. This arrangement, whilst having the usual drawbacks attached to the use of portable cabins as polling stations, worked satisfactorily. In the absence of any suitable buildings in the locality:
64. It is recommended that a portable cabin be sited in polling district KC and be the designated polling place for polling district KC

DALSTON WARD

- 65 The polling place for approximately 450 electors in polling OF is at 6 Low Moor Avenue, Blackwell. Circumstances have recently changed at this property and it is not certain that the premises will still be available for use as a polling station in the future. Officers have investigated a number of possible options for alternative locations to site a polling station in that area but it has not been possible to identify a suitable building in the locality. Some years ago the polling station was provided in a portable cabin located on Blackwell Common where it fronts on to Low Moor Avenue. The Blackwell Common comes under the jurisdiction of the St. Cuthbert Without Parish Council. The Parish Council have been approached to seek their agreement to once again locating a portable Cabin on Blackwell Common where it fronts on to Low Moor Avenue for use as a polling station.
- 66 It is recommended that subject to the approval of the St. Cuthbert Without Parish Council a portable cabin be sited on Blackwell Common where it fronts on to Low Moor Avenue and be the designated polling place for polling district OF.

OTHER POLLING PLACES

67. The usual booking requests will be sent early in the New Year in respect of polling stations to be used at the Parliamentary and City Council elections in May 2015, therefore confirmation of availability has not been received for the premises set out in appendix 1. In order to ensure that polling stations are provided for all electors,
68. It is recommended that the Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with relevant Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the City Council elections if the usual premises prove to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The details of consultation carried out to inform this report are set out in paragraphs 5,6 and 12 of the report

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1** To provide polling stations for electors as per the statutory duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 5.1** Properly run elections with the best possible facilities provide the democratic mandate for the Council to determine its priorities.

Contact Officer: Ian Dixon

Ext: 7555

Appendices List of Polling Places
attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's – The Town Clerk & Chief Executive is the senior officer in charge of the conduct of elections and as such has been involved in the drafting of this report. The risk is that the Council does not comply with its duty to provide suitable and adequate polling stations. This report demonstrates how the Council is seeking to fulfil its obligations.

Deputy Chief Executive – None

Economic Development – None

Governance – This is a report from the Governance Directorate and relevant comments are contained within the body of the said report. The Council is obliged to review polling stations and also comply with its obligations under the equality legislation.

Local Environment – None.

Resources – None.

Polling Places – Urban Wards

APPENDIX 1

WARD	POLLING PLACE	POLLING DISTRICT	ELECTORATE (Sept 2014)
Belah	Kingmoor Business Centre	AA;AB,AF	2057
	Belah Community Centre	AC,AH	807
	1 Etterby Close	AD	1159
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	AE,AG	965
Stanwix Urban	Portable cabin, Knowefield Avenue	BA;	1206
	Stanwix Community Centre	BB; BC; BE	2314
	St. Augustine's Parish Centre	BD	1066
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	BF	154
St. Aidans	St. Aidan's Church Hall	CA,CF	1720
	Greystone Community Centre	CB,CE	776
	St. Cuthbert's Court, Myddleton St.	CC, CH	494
	Greystone Community Centre	CD,CG	1660
Botcherby	Botcherby Community Centre	DA	1442
	Botcherby Family Centre	DB	776
	Portable cabin, Cumrew Close	DC	781
	Harraby Community Centre	DD; DE	1668
Harraby	The Pinegrove Hotel, London Road	EA	1203
	Inglewood Infant School	EB	1303
	Harraby Catholic Club	EC,EF	1119
	Portable cabin, Cumwhinton Road	ED,EG	1231
Upperby	Creighton Rugby Club	EE	280
	St. Margaret Mary's Social Club	FA	879
	CDC Building adj. Upperby School	FB	809
	St. John's Ambulance, Scalegate Rd.	FC	1019
Currock	Petteril Bank Community Centre	FD; FE	1385
	Currock Community Centre	GA	1086
	Bishop Harvey Goodwin School	GB,GE,GF	1474
	Currock Community Centre	GC	960
Denton Holme	St. Herbert's Church Hall	GD	1157
	Methodist Church Hall, Wigton Road	HA	342
	Denton Holme Community Centre	HB; HC	1943
	St. James Parish Centre	HD	1054
Castle	Portable cabin, Longsowerby	HE	1214
	Portable cabin, Lorne Crescent	HF	481
	Newtown School	JA	904
	West End Temp Hall Hawick Street	JB	715
Morton	Methodist Church Hall, Wigton Road	JC,JK	1352
	Christian Science Church	JD,JF	853
	St. Cuthbert's Court, Myddleton St.	JE,JG,JH	553
	St. Luke's Church Hall	KA; KB	2104
Yewdale	Portable Cabin Border Terrier Car Park.	KC	1442
	Portable cabin, Borrowdale Road	KD,KF	735
	Portable cabin, Scawfell Road	KE	577
	Yewdale Community Centre	LA; LB	2313

Belle Vue	Portable cabin, Richmond Green	LC	1166
	Portable cabin, Nairn Way	LD	904
	Richard Rose Morton Academy	LE	437
	Church of Nazarene	MA; MB	2232
	Newtown School	MC	1397
	St. Bedes School	MD, MF, MG	698
	Portable cabin, Hawthorn Grove	ME, MH	716

Polling Places – Rural Wards

Ward	Polling Place	Polling District	Electorate (Sept 2014)
Brampton	Moot Hall, Brampton	PK	2299
	Brampton Community Centre	PKA	1245
	Milton Village Hall	PL	116
Burgh	Beaumont Parish Hall	NA	381
	Village Hall, Burgh-by-Sands	NB	628
	Thurstonfield Methodist Chapel	NC	345
	Village Hall, Great Orton	ND	347
Dalston	Victory Hall, Dalston	OA	1777
	Primrose Hall, Gaitsgill	OB	304
	Embassy Ballroom, Cummersdale	OC	427
	Portable cabin, Carleton	OD	223
	Wreay Village Hall	OE	322
	6 Low Moor Avenue, Blackwell	OF	468
	Portable cabin, Black Lion, Durdar	OG	318
	Creighton Rugby Club	OH	1012
	Watson Hall, Castle Carrock	PP1	263
Great Corby and Geltsdale	St Mary's Church, Cumrew	PR1; PR2	108
	Cumwhitton Public Hall	PS	259
	Heads Nook Village Hall	PAB2	282
	Talkin Village Hall	PAC	141
	Great Corby Village Hall	PBB	366
	Downagate Community Centre	PBC	357
	Reading Room, Hayton	PAA	579
Hayton	Heads Nook Village Hall	PAB1	314
	Methodist Church Hall, Corby Hill	PAD	754
Irthing	Lees Hill School	PG1; PG2	180
	Roadhead Public Hall	PH2	40
	Cricket Pavilion, Lanercost	PO1; PO2	179
	Taylor Institute, Low Row	PW	250
	Methodist Church Hall, Gilsland	PX1; PX2; PX3	184
	Lacy Thompson Hall, Hallbankgate	PY1; PY2	552
	Walton Village Hall	PAX	231
	Longtown Community Centre	PE1- PE4	2234
Longtown and Rockcliffe	Moat Village Centre	PF1; PF2	162
	Former Conservatory Centre, Harker	PAG2	224
	Rockcliffe Community Centre	PAM	441
	Blackford School	PAY	326

Lyne	Roadhead Public Hall	PH1	339
	Hethersgill Parish Hall	PAE	323
	Fir Ends School, Smithfield	PAJ	302
	Nicholforest Hall	PAK	328
	Westfield House, Roweltown	PAS	137
	Stapleton Public Hall	PAW	196
	Village Hall, Newtown, Irthington	PAF	560
Stanwix Rural	Former Conservatory Centre, Harker	PAG1; PAG3	168
	Portable Office, Cargo	PAH	436
	Scaleby Village Hall	PAR	304
	Crosby Parish Hall	PAT1; PAT2	412
	Houghton Village Hall	PAU1; PAU2	1404
	Women's Institute Hall, Linstock	PAV	319
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	PBK	137
Wetheral	Cotehill Village Hall	RA	506
	Cumwhinton Village Hall	RB	388
	Parish Centre, Scotby	RC	1112
	Memorial Hall, Warwick-on-Eden	RD	192
	Wetheral Village Hall	RE	1066
	Portable cabin, Aglionby	RF	231
	Portable cabin, Cumrew Close	RG	209
	Creighton Rugby Club	RH	213

Your Reference: Polling Review 2014
Our Reference: PF/KE
Enquiries to: Paul Foote
Direct Dial: (01768) 212205
Email: paul.foote@eden.gov.uk
Date: 6 November 2014

The logo for Eden District Council features a stylized wavy line to the left of the word "Eden" in a large, elegant serif font.

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Mr I Dixon
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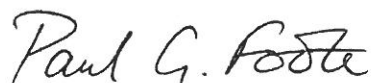
Dear Mr Dixon

Review of Polling Places

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2014.

I have no personal knowledge of any of the polling places within the city of Carlisle that are used for elections for the Penrith and The Border Constituency. However, I have no objection to the use of any of the polling stations for the purposes of an election and, as far as I am aware, consider them to be suitable having regard to the factors to which you refer in the review criteria.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul G. Foote".

P G Foote

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

EX.141/14 **REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS (Key Decision – KD.27/14)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

Portfolio Finance, Governance and Resources

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Resources

Subject Matter

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder submitted report GD.58/14 presenting the results of the annual review of polling arrangements as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Directorate Plan provided for an annual polling review to be carried out and it had been the practice in previous years to review the arrangements in those Wards having local elections in the following May.

Details of the statutory provisions and the criteria which had been used in carrying out the review were provided.

As Members were aware, a number of separate and unconnected reviews of electoral arrangements had been undertaken over the last few years, including the Review of Cumbria County Council carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

In addition the City Council had, in April 2011, requested the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to carry out an electoral review of current arrangements with a view to securing a significant reduction in the number of Councillors. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England indicated at that time that, due to the number of reviews currently on going or planned, such reviews had to be prioritised and, as Carlisle did not meet the further electoral review criteria, any review of the City Council electoral arrangements would not be carried out in the near future.

All City Councillors and all County Councillors serving Electoral Districts in the Carlisle City Council area had been consulted on the polling arrangements for their particular wards/divisions, the two local M.P's and persons appointed as Election Agents in recent elections had also been consulted. The views of the Carlisle Access Group were also sought on polling arrangements and that was referred to in more detail in paragraph 12.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder advised that Council had a duty to consult the Returning Officer of every parliamentary constituency in the Council's area on the arrangements. The Returning Officer for the Penrith and the Border constituency, which currently included all rural Wards except Burgh, Dalston and Wetheral, commented that he had no objection to the use of any polling stations for the purpose of an election and, as far as he was aware, considered them to be suitable having regard to the factors included in the review criteria (Appendix 2).

The current polling places and electorate were listed in Appendix 1 and those locations had been reviewed in the light of any representations and comments received.

In terms of access for disabled voters, the report set out details of the action taken to ensure that, so far as was reasonable and practicable, every polling place was accessible to electors who were disabled. The Access Group had been consulted on the review and were satisfied that no action was required currently. However, if any changes in polling station locations required it the Group was happy to carry out an audit of a new polling station location for public access.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder further drew Members' attention to the use of mobile polling stations and the use of houses / schools as polling places. He added that, in response to requests from School Governing Bodies and representations from the Local Education Authority, the number of schools used as polling places had been reduced in recent years, and now only eight Schools within the Council's area were used as polling venues.

As part of the current review Officers had taken the opportunity to look ahead at the possible impact of future residential developments on polling districts and polling district boundaries.

Planning Services had provided details of outstanding planning permissions for residential developments within the City Council's area and outline permissions. There were a number of potential developments in the City with outstanding or outline permissions for circa 50 properties and above. In forecasting the potential impacts of developments on electoral numbers the usual formula used was 1.8 electors per unit. Details of the position following the use of that formula to forecast the impact of major developments within the City on current electoral registers for that area were provided.

The figures indicated that if the developments referred to above were fully built then some realignment of the register for Belle Vue (Districts MA and MC), Dalston (Districts OA and OC), Denton Holme (District HC), Harraby (District EA), Morton (District KC) and Stanwix Rural (District PAG1) would be required. However, as the timescales for the above developments anticipated that those major developments would be progressed over a number of years, it was suggested that the position be noted at the present time and that no changes be made to polling district boundaries at this time.

The County Councillor for Longtown had suggested that consideration could be given to creating a further polling district to serve electors in the north end of Longtown to cater for existing electors and further electors moving to potential new developments at the north end of Longtown.

No further representations had been received during the review with regard to polling district boundaries in the City Council area.

Whilst noting the position on the potential impact of future developments referred to above, it was considered that the polling district boundaries currently in place were an acceptable arrangement. In the light thereof it was recommended that no changes be made to current polling district boundaries at that time, but that the position with regard to development in the polling districts itemised above be kept under review.

The large majority of polling places were satisfactory and had remained unchanged for many years. The choice of suitable buildings was limited and in most cases there was no alternative to the present arrangements. Change was therefore only considered where the current premises were no longer available or satisfactory, or representations had been received in respect of particular buildings.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder then reported in more detail on suggested changes in voting arrangements for the Wetheral, Stanwix Urban, Longtown and Rockcliffe, Brampton, Morton and Dalston Wards. He further recommended that the Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors and himself, to change polling place locations at the City Council elections if the usual premises proved to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder wished to place on record his thanks to the Electoral Services Officer and his team for what was a very clear and well written report. He then moved the recommendations contained within the report, which were duly seconded by the Leader.

Summary of options rejected A number of options set out in Report GD.58/14 with regard to polling arrangements

DECISION

That Report GD.58/14 and the recommendations therein be referred to Council for consideration, the recommendations being that:

1. No changes be made to current polling district boundaries at this time but that the position with regard to development in the polling districts itemised in paragraphs 34 and 35 be kept under review (paragraph 37)
2. It is recommended that the polling arrangements in the following Wards remain unchanged (paragraph 39)

**Belle Vue
Belah
Burgh
Botcherby
Castle
Currock**

**Denton Holme
Great Corby & Geltsdale
Harraby
Hayton
Irthing**

**Lyne
St. Aidans
Stanwix Rural
Upperby
Yewdale**

3. It is recommended that the new Community Centre at Wetheral be used as a replacement polling station for polling district RE (paragraph 46)
4. It is recommended that the new Parish Centre at St. Augustines be used as the replacement polling station for polling district BD (paragraph 49)
5. It is recommended that, given the suitability of the current polling station location and the timescales for completion of residential developments to the north of the town, the current polling arrangements for Longtown remain unchanged but that the situation be reviewed in future years (paragraph 53)
6. It is recommended that the current polling arrangements for voters in the Kirkandrews on Esk Parish (PE3) be continued (paragraph 56)
7. It is recommended that the Irthing Centre continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PKA (paragraph 58)
8. It is recommended that the Moot Hall continue to be used as the polling station for polling district PK (paragraph 61)
9. It is recommended that a portable cabin be sited in polling district KC and be the designated polling place for polling district KC (paragraph 64)
10. It is recommended that, subject to the approval of the St. Cuthbert Without Parish Council, a portable cabin be sited on Blackwell Common where it fronts on to Low Moor Avenue and be the designated polling place for polling district OF (paragraph 66)
11. Officers continue to monitor the use of portable cabins as polling stations and continue to investigate potential alternatives. It be further recommended that Officers discuss with the supplier the use of a number of self contained units and improved units with a wider door as detailed in paragraph 24 at a number of polling station locations where portable cabins are currently used.
12. The Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with relevant Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the City Council elections if the usual premises prove to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances (paragraph 68)

Reasons for Decision

To provide polling stations for electors as per the statutory duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983