CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: Governance and Resources

Date of Meeting: 31st October 2011

Public

Key Decision: Yes/No **Recorded in Forward Plan:** No

Inside/Outside Policy Framework

Title: REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS
Report of: Assistant Director (Governance)
Report reference: GD.61/11

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 8 November 2011.

Recommendations:

(See over)

Contact Officer: Ian Dixon **Ext:** 7555

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. That no changes be made to current polling district boundaries.

2. It is recommended that the polling arrangements in the following wards remain unchanged:

Belah	**Denton Holme**	**St Aidans**
Brampton	**Great Corby & Geltsdale**	**Stanwix Rural**
Botcherby	**Hayton**	**Upperby**
Castle	**Irthing**	**Wetheral**
Currock	**Longtown & Rockcliffe**	**Yewdale**
Dalston	**Lyne**	

3. Belle Vue Primary School continue to be the polling place for districts MA and MB.

4. The newly renovated Village Hall at Burgh by Sands be designated as the polling place for polling district NB and a letter of thanks be sent to the Burgh by Sands School for their assistance with the 2011 election.

5. The Community Building Annexe at Inglewood Infant School be designated as the polling place for polling district EB.

6. The Stanwix Community Centre be designated as the polling place for polling districts BB, BC and BE and a letter of thanks be sent to the St. Michael Parish centre for their assistance over the last few years.

7. A portable cabin in the car park of the Border Terrier public house be designated as the polling place for polling district KC.

8. 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 23 above at a number of polling station locations where portable cabins are currently used.

9. 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.

IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – None
- Financial – None
- Legal – None
- Corporate – None
- Risk Management – None
- Environmental – None
- Crime and Disorder – None
- Impact on Customers – Review of polling facilities
- Equality and Diversity – See below

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Does the change have an impact on the following?

Equality Impact Screening	Impact Yes/No?	Is the impact positive or negative?
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	**No**	
Disability	**Yes**	**Positive**
Race	**No**	
Gender/ Transgender	**No**	
Sexual Orientation	**No**	
Religion or belief	**No**	
Human Rights	**No**	
Health inequalities	**No**	
Rurality	**No**	

If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:

The Council is reviewing findings from Election 2010, to improve polling arrangements. This information triggers a review of EqIA 9: Governance.

If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.

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 is therefore required to carry out a further review before the end of 2011. 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 are currently ongoing, or requested, including the Review of the Cumbria County Council, which is being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Review of Parliamentary Boundaries which is being carried out by the 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 have indicated that due to the number of reviews currently on going or planned they have had to prioritise the requests and, as Carlisle does not meet the further electoral review criteria, it is unlikely that any review of the City Council electoral arrangements will take place in the current or the next financial year. (Copy letter from Local Government Boundary Commission for England attached as Appendix 2)

5. Notice of the review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places was published in the press, on the Council's website, in the Library, in the Civic Centre and Penrith Town Hall in August 2011 with a closing date for submission of representations / comments of 23rd September. All City Councillors have been consulted on the polling arrangements for their particular wards, 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 the (Eden)District Council had not received any representations in relation to the inadequacies or

unsuitability of any of the polling stations for the purpose of the elections. He therefore 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 3)

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 at their meeting in September received a presentation from the Electoral Services Officer on the Review of Polling Arrangements. The Group raised a

number of issues regarding the way in which information is provided to voters and assistance for disabled voters but did not raise any specific issues relating to Polling Districts or Polling Stations (Extract from minutes of the meeting attached as Appendix 4). The Council's Access Officer has indicated that she would review and advise on any location which is highlighted as having a problem with access for disabled voters. As part of the preparations for the 2011 election, a Member of the group visited one of the polling stations which was being used for the first time to check its suitability for use by disabled voters. It is hoped that this arrangement can be built upon to assess buildings which are used as polling stations for the first time in the future.

FREE USE OF ROOMS

13. In addition to free use of school premises, described in paragraph 28 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

14. 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

15. 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.

16. 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)

17. 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.

18. Members will recall the coverage in the National Media of the 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.)

19. In the Carlisle area the stations at Yewdale Community Centre and at the St. Michael's Parish Centre have the most electors allocated. These stations have approximately 2300 voters allocated. Both 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. Officers will 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

20. 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 one additional portable cabin had to be used in the 2011 elections and this is referred to in more detail at paragraph 47.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. The supplier has informed the Council that he is now able to supply a limited number of units that would incorporate a 1000mm door, disabled access, toilet and solar powered electricity (two such units were used in the May 2011 election). 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. The supplier has, however, added that there would be an additional cost above the cost of the existing portable units for the self contained units and the improved Unit with a wider door referred to above. It should also 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.

24. 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.

25. 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. It is further recommended that Officers discuss with the supplier the use of self contained units as detailed in paragraph 23 above at a number of polling station locations where portable cabins are currently used.

USE OF HOUSES

26. 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.

27. 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

28. 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.

29. 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 eleven schools in the Council's area are now used as polling venues.

30. As part of planning for the 2011 Election and referendum discussions were held with the Inglewood Infant School and the Belle Vue School on polling arrangements at these locations which enabled revised provisions to be put in place so that both schools could remain open for polling day. For the reasons given in paragraphs 20-25 above, mobile stations are not considered to be viable alternatives to school premises

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.

- Belle Vue (MA currently 1154 on roll) - Development adjacent to Low Meadow/ Brookside (60 Units, potentially 108 additional electors)

- (MC currently 1289 on roll) – Development at Thomlinson Avenue (113 Units, potentially 200 additional electors)

- (MD currently 693 on roll – Development at Dalton Avenue (130 Units potentially 230 additional electors)

- Castle (JA currently 943 on roll) – Development at former Ambulance Station Infirmary Street (60 Units, potentially 108 additional electors)

- Currock (GA currently 1066 on roll) – Development at South Western Terrace (99 Units potentially 180 electors)

- Denton Holme (HB currently 938 on roll) Development at Denton Business Park (196 Studentrooms) and Development at Lime Street (17 Units)(Potentially 225 additional electors)

- (HC currently 1049 on roll) - Development at Westmorland Street former Penguin Factory (58 Units), land at Rome Street (48 Units)and outline permission on land bounded by former railway (98 Units)(Total 204 Units, potentially 364 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) – Outstanding permissions on Developments at Watts Storage Depot (45 Units) and former Dairy Harraby Green Business Park (78 Units) (Total 123 Units potentially 220 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 Garden Village (253 Units potentially 450 electors) Development at Peter Lane / Dalston Road (226 Units potentially 400 additional electors)

- Longtown (PE2 currently 882 on roll) – Former Sawmill site Netherby Road Longtown (90 Units potentially 162 additional electors)

- Stanwix Rural (PAG1 currently123 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 (District OC), Denton Holme (District HC), Harraby (District EA), Morton (District KC) and Stanwix Rural (District PAG1). However, as the timescales for the above

developments are not clear at present, it is suggested that the position be noted at the present time and that no changes are made to polling district boundaries.

35. No representations have been received during this review with regard to polling district boundaries in the City Council area and, 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 and in recognition of the other reviews being carried out at the current time it is recommended that no changes be made to current polling district boundaries at this time.

36. 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.

37. 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:

Belah	**Denton Holme**	**St Aidans**
Brampton	**Great Corby & Geltsdale**	**Stanwix Rural**
Botcherby	**Hayton**	**Upperby**
Castle	**Irthing**	**Wetheral**
Currock	**Longtown & Rockcliffe**	**Yewdale**
Dalston	**Lyne**	

Suggested changes in Belle Vue, Burgh, Harraby, Morton, and Stanwix Urban wards are discussed below

BELLE VUE WARD

38 Belle Vue Primary School is the designated polling place for over 2100 electors in districts MA and MB. As part of previous reviews, representations had been made on behalf of the governors, that the school should no longer be used for election purposes because such use would necessitate the closure of the whole school on polling days, to the detriment of the education of nearly 400 pupils. Prior to this year's election, discussions were held with the Headteacher of Belle Vue School with regard to arrangements for election day. The Headteacher was able to put in place arrangements for the election to be held in the school hall with access for voters direct from the car park, meaning that the election could be held without the need to close the school for the day. This arrangement worked well for both the election and the school.

39. As satisfactory arrangements have now been put in place that allows the election to take place without the need for the School to close for the day, and in the absence

of any other suitable venues in the locality, it is recommended that Belle Vue Primary School continue to be the polling place for districts MA and MB.

BURGH WARD

40. The Village Hall at Burgh by Sands has been the designated polling place for approximately 650 electors in polling district NB. The hall was, however, unavailable for use at the May 2011 election as refurbishment works were ongoing. Therefore arrangements were made for electors to use the Burgh – by - Sands School. The refurbishments at the Village Hall have now been completed and the hall is once more available for use as a polling station.

41. It is recommended, therefore, that the newly refurbished Village Hall at Burgh by Sands be designated as the polling place for polling district NB and a letter of thanks be sent to the School for their assistance with the election in 2011.

HARRABY WARD

42. The Inglewood Infant School is the designated polling station for approximately 1200 voters in polling district EB. The polling place has previously been located in the School Hall which has necessitates the School closing on polling day. Following discussions with staff at the school prior to the election in May 2011 it was agreed that the polling station would be sited in the community building annexe in the school grounds which would enable the election to take place without the need for the school to close for the day. This arrangement worked well for both the election and the school.

43. It is recommended that the Community Building Annexe at Inglewood Infant School be designated as the polling place for district EB.

STANWIX URBAN WARD

44. The St. Michael's Parish Centre is currently the designated polling station for approximately 2300 electors in polling districts BB, BC and BE. In previous years the Stanwix Community Centre buildings in Church Street were used as the polling station. However, these premises were not available for a number of years due to the works to provide new Community Centre facilities in Stanwix. These works have now been completed and the new Community Centre building in Church Street is now open.

45 A local member has requested that the polling station for electors in polling districts BB, BC and BE revert back to the Stanwix Community Centre building. Officers have approached the responsible officer regarding the availability of the Community Building as a polling station and are satisfied that appropriate arrangements can be made.

46. It is therefore recommended that the Stanwix Community Centre building in Church Street be designated as the polling place for polling districts BB, BC and BE and a letter of thanks be sent to the St. Michaels Parish Centre for their assistance over the last few years.

MORTON WARD

47. The polling place for approximately 1350 electors in polling district KC has for some years been the St. Edmund's Chapel on Newlaithes Avenue. The Chapel has now closed and is no longer available for use as a polling station. For the elections in May 2011 Officers, with the help of local Ward Members, sought to identify a suitable alternative polling place. It was however not possible to identify a permanent building in the area as a suitable polling place and arrangements were made to site a portable cabin in the car park of the Border Terrier public house. 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:

48. It is recommended that a portable cabin in the car park of the Border Terrier public house be designated as the polling place for polling district KC

OTHER POLLING PLACES

49. The usual booking requests will be sent early in the New Year in respect of polling stations to be used at the City Council elections in May 2012, 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,

50. 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.

Polling Places – Urban Wards

APPENDIX 1

WARD	POLLING PLACE	POLLING DISTRICT	ELECTORATE (May 2011)
Belah	Kingmoor Junior School	AA;AB	2079
	Belah Community Centre	AC	794
	Portable cabin, Etterby Road	AD	1115
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	AE	960
Stanwix	Portable cabin, Knowefield Avenue	BA;	1202
Urban	St. Michael's Parish Centre	BB; BC; BE	2320
	St. Augustine's Parish Centre	BD	1120
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	BF	149
St. Aidans	St. Aidan's Church Hall	CA	1722
	Greystone Community Centre	CB	797
	St. Cuthbert's Court, Myddleton St.	CC	507
	Greystone Community Centre	CD	1686
Botcherby	Botcherby Community Centre	DA	1446
	Botcherby Family Centre	DB	784
	Portable cabin, Cumrew Close	DC	777
	Harraby Community Centre	DD; DE	1711
Harraby	The Pinegrove Hotel, London Road	EA	1133
	Inglewood Infant School	EB	1190
	Harraby Catholic Club	EC	1152
	Portable cabin, Cumwhinton Road	ED	1223
	Creighton Rugby Club	EE	275
Upperby	St. Margaret Mary's Social Club	FA	887
	CDC Building adj. Upperby School	FB	847
	St. John's Ambulance, Scalegate Rd.	FC	1031
	Petteril Bank Community Centre	FD; FE	1327
Currock	Currock Community Centre	GA	1066
	Bishop Harvey Goodwin School	GB	1468
	Currock Community Centre	GC	932
	St. Herbert's Church Hall	GD	1167
Denton	Methodist Church Hall, Wigton Road	HA	362
Holme	Denton Holme Community Centre	HB; HC	1973
	St. James Parish Centre	HD	830
	Portable cabin, Longsowerby	HE	1267
	Portable cabin, Lorne Crescent	HF	460
Castle	Newtown School	JA	943
	West End Temp Hall Hawick Street	JB	807
	Methodist Church Hall, Wigton Road	JC	1381
	Deaf Vision 3 Compton Street	JD	788
	St. Cuthbert's Court, Myddleton St.	JE	555
Morton	St. Luke's Church Hall	KA; KB	2112
	St. Edmunds Chapel, Newlaithes Ave.	KC	1336
	Portable cabin, Borrowdale Road	KD	740
	Portable cabin, Scawfell Road	KE	567
Yewdale	Yewdale Community Centre	LA; LB	2290
	Portable cabin, Richmond Green	LC	1172

	Portable cabin, Nairn Way	LD	933
	Richard Rose Morton Academy	LE	431
Belle Vue	Belle Vue Primary School	MA; MB	2153
	Newtown School	MC	1289
	St. Bedes School	MD	693
	Portable cabin, Hawthorn Grove	ME	714

Polling Places – Rural Wards

Ward	Polling Place	Polling District	Electorate (May 2011)
Brampton	Moot Hall, Brampton	PK	2209
	Brampton Community Centre	PKA	1227
	Milton Village Hall	PL	116
Burgh	Beaumont Parish Hall	NA	376
	Village Hall, Burgh-by-Sands	NB	649
	Thurstonfield Methodist Chapel	NC	362
	Village Hall, Great Orton	ND	358
Dalston	Victory Hall, Dalston	OA	1772
	Primrose Hall, Gaitsgill	OB	305
	Embassy Ballroom, Cummersdale	OC	379
	Portable cabin, Carleton	OD	228
	Wreay Village Hall	OE	320
	6 Low Moor Avenue, Blackwell	OF	470
	Portable cabin, Black Lion, Durdar	OG	325
	Creighton Rugby Club	OH	987
Great	Watson Hall, Castle Carrock	PP1	281
Corby and	Helme Farm, Cumrew	PR1; PR2	109
Geltsdale	Cumwhitton Public Hall	PS	264
	Heads Nook Village Hall	PAB2	278
	Talkin Village Hall	PAC	122
	Great Corby Village Hall	PBB	371
	Downagate Community Centre	PBC	360
Hayton	Reading Room, Hayton	PAA	586
	Heads Nook Village Hall	PAB1	316
	Methodist Church Hall, Corby Hill	PAD	781
Irthing	Lees Hill School	PG1; PG2	177
	Roadhead Public Hall	PH2	37
	Cricket Pavilion, Lanercost	PO1; PO2	180
	Taylor Institute, Low Row	PW	262
	Methodist Church Hall, Gilsland	PX1; PX2; PX3	189
	Lacy Thompson Hall, Hallbankgate	PY1; PY2	554
	Walton Village Hall	PAX	233
Longtown	Longtown Community Centre	PE1- PE4	2270
and	Moat Village Centre	PF1; PF2	169
Rockcliffe	Former Conservatory Centre, Harker	PAG2	220
	Rockcliffe Community Centre	PAM	422
	Blackford School	PAY	332
Lyne	Roadhead Public Hall	PH1	325

	Hethersgill Parish Hall	PAE	326
	Fir Ends School, Smithfield	PAJ	298
	Nicholforest Hall	PAK	323
	Westfield House, Roweltown	PAS	142
	Stapleton Public Hall	PAW	213
Stanwix	Village Hall, Newtown, Irthington	PAF	576
Rural	Former Conservatory Centre, Harker	PAG1; PAG3	153
	The Four Oaks, Cargo	PAH	423
	Scaleby Village Hall	PAR	299
	Crosby Parish Hall	PAT1; PAT2	423
	Houghton Village Hall	PAU1; PAU2	1392
	Women's Institute Hall, Linstock	PAV	301
	Portable cabin, east side Kingstown Rd	PBK	147
Wetheral	Cotehill Village Hall	RA	483
	Cumwhinton Village Hall	RB	364
	Parish Centre, Scotby	RC	1093
	Memorial Hall, Warwick-on-Eden	RD	199
	Wetheral Village Hall	RE	1028
	Portable cabin, Aglionby	RF	228
	Portable cabin, Cumrew Close	RG	132
	Creighton Rugby Club	RH	202

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Maggie Mooney
Chief Executive
Carlisle City Council
Civic Centre
Carlisle
CA3 8QG

RECEIVED
26 SEP 2011

23 September 2011

Dear Ms Mooney

FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW (FER) OF CARLISLE

I am writing in response to your letter of 24 June 2011 and follow up correspondence from Mark Lambert, Assistant Director Governance, on 29 April 2011, registering an interest in an electoral review of Carlisle City Council with a view to a possible reduction in council size.

The Commission has been developing its work programme for the next two years and has received quite a number of requests from local authorities seeking an electoral review, to the extent that, in formulating the programme, it has had to prioritise them.

In developing its review programme, the Commission has had regard to the need to ensure that its review programme delivers electoral equality for voters in local authority elections across England. In order to meet this objective, the Commission has looked first to address those requests from local authorities in which the electoral variances meet the criteria it has adopted for triggering a further electoral review.

The electorate data we have for Carlisle indicates that electoral variances are currently relatively low and only 3 of 22 wards (14%) have electoral variances which are more than 10% from the average for the City. This is below the 30% threshold to trigger a review. Moreover, no single ward currently has a variance of over 30%.

This means that Carlisle currently meets neither of the FER criteria the Commission

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has adopted to automatically trigger a review. Given that we are also undertaking a FER of Cumbria County Council, we have been unable to include Carlisle in the Commission's two-year programme. However, as we conclude the Cumbria review and progress with our work programme, it may be the case that there will be an opportunity to meet your request at a future date, particularly as we extend our programme of reviews into 2013 and beyond. We will contact you if such an opportunity emerges.

I appreciate that you will find this response disappointing but the Commission has a responsibility to balance requests for reviews to address council size against its requirement to deliver electoral equality to voters in England.

Yours sincerely

Archie Gall
Director of Reviews
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Archie.Gall@lgbce.org.uk

CC. Mr Mark Lambert, Assistant Director Governance, Carlisle City Council

Your Reference:	Polling Review 2011
Our Reference:	PF/MDF
Enquiries to:	P G Foote
Direct Dial:	(01768) 212205
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Date:	19 September 2011

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Sent via email: iand@carlisle.gov.uk

Mr Ian Dixon
Carlisle City Council
Civic Centre
Carlisle
CA3 8QG

Dear Mr Dixon

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Thank you for your letter of 09 August.

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 can confirm that the District Council did not receive any representations in relation to the inadequacy or unsuitability of any of the polling stations for the purposes of the election. 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

Paul G. Foote

P G Foote

Carlisle Access Group

(Chairman Tel: 016977 46119 email: peter@lowrow.plus.com)
(Secretary Tel: 01228 817183 email: Heatherl@carlisle.gov.uk)

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2011 At Tullie House

Present:

Peter Emerson – Chairman	Representative for Fast Forward 89
Elaine Barnett – Vice Chair	Individual representative
Denise Moses – Plans Officer	Representative for DACE
Judith Holmshaw – Licensing Officer	Representative for CVS
Heather Irving – Secretary	
Nigel Ganley	Individual Representative
Jane Kilgour (+ Interpreter – Lorraine Brown)	Representative for Deaf Vision
Ruth Higginson	Representative for Age Concern
Lorraine Rogers	Representative for Carlisle Society for the Blind
Sheila Gregory	Representative for Mencap
Claire Unwin	Individual representative
PC Julie Dodd	Representative of Cumbria Constabulary
Douglas Baptie (visitor)	Representative for Cerebral Palsy Cumbria (CPC)

Apologies:

Karen Lockhart	Representative for Carlisle City Council – Shopmobility

Speaker: Ian Dixon – Electoral Services Officer, Carlisle City Council.

The group had their photograph taken in readiness for a press release and article in the Carlisle Focus regarding the information on Carlisle Access Group within the Carlisle City Council web site.

Peter welcomed the group and gave apologies as listed above. Our speaker – Ian Dixon – was introduced and welcomed to the group.

The following is a crib of Ian's presentation notes:

Presentation to Access Group September 2011

Introduction

My duties include organising elections in the City Councils area. Next scheduled elections are next May when there will be some City Council elections and the election of a Police Commissioner for Cumbria. As part of the preparations for those elections and as part of the councils statutory duty we are reviewing polling arrangements to see if any changes are needed.

There are just short of 50,000 houses in the Councils area with slightly under 85,000 electors. We divide the Councils area up into 22 Wards (12 in the urban area and 10 in the rural area). In those wards we divide the areas up into smaller areas (polling districts) for people to vote in and we have a total of 132 polling districts with their own registers. Because some polling stations have more than one register we have a total of 118 polling stations throughout the City Council area.

The purpose of the current review is to see if any of the streets in individual polling districts should be moved to a different polling district within the same ward and to ask for views / comments on the location of polling stations, any suggestions for change or general comments about polling stations.

Polling Stations

Legally the Council is required to provide " such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances" and also "seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling station is accessible to electors who are disabled".
I have circulated a copy of the list of polling stations which were used in the election / referendum last May. Many of those stations have been used for a number of years and in an ideal world we would have a choice of venues but unfortunately, in most cases, there is little if any choice. In most cases we try and find a school, church hall or community building but in some instances there is simply no community buildings available and we have to use a portacabin instead.

This year we had a number of polling stations that we had used in the past that were not available for use. St Edmunds church Hall at Morton, Burgh by Sands Village Hall and we also had a request to use the community building at Inglewood School rather than the school hall. Mrs Moses of the Access Group was kind enough to do a test run at the Inglewood Community building to see that it was fit for use. We were confident that the school building in Burgh had a good access and we had to use a portacabin at Morton. Hopefully we can use the Inglewood experience as a precedent for future changes of polling station

Provision for Disabled Voters

Much of the election process is defined in law and what can and what cannot be provided is limited by what can be done legally e.g. ballot papers in larger sizes or in Braille. The size of the ballot paper is specified and also the size of the party emblems that are produced beside the candidates names. We are however required to provide a large sample of the ballot paper which is often displayed on a wall in the polling station and a hand held larger version of the ballot papers which voters can take into the polling booth with them.

We also provide a template for blind / partially sighted voters and a magnifying aid.

Anyone who needs assistance may bring a companion to help them, they can ask the staff on duty to assist or they can ask the staff to mark the ballot paper for them.
At every polling station there is also a polling booth with a lower shelf that is available for wheel chair users.

For anyone who would prefer not to go to the polling station in person there is the option of voting by post. You need to submit an application but do not have to give a reason for the application.

You could also appoint a proxy to vote for you but if it is a long term arrangement rather than a one off. You need to give a reason and the application would need to be supported by a doctor, nurse etc.

Feedback / Comments

I hope that you have found this helpful but if you have any suggestions or comments about Polling Districts, The polling stations that we use or the facilities that we provide for disabled voters I would be pleased if you could let me know. If you think of anything that might help after today's meeting then please do not hesitate to contact me at the Civic Centre. (01228 817555)

Discussion:

It was noted during discussions that there is a certain age group that feel it is their duty to attend the voting process but there is some frustration that the election material is not always delivered by candidates to all prospective voters. It was felt that rural areas in particular did not always receive election material. Ian indicated that the distribution of information by candidates was not a matter that he had any influence over.

Although larger print ballot papers are available on the wall of the polling stations, Braille is actually on the template which assists voters who are blind or have a visual impairment to locate the space to make their vote. It was felt that this could be improved on as the brail only gave the candidates number and not the candidates name which means an individual in this position has to rely on being told who the candidates are and which party they represent.

Q. Could the names of the candidates be included on the Braille template?
A. As the candidates change from election to election there would be limited time and budget to facilitate this.

Q. Individuals who have to have the names of candidates read to them loose there privacy when voting! Could the candidate information be put on audio to be available at each of the polling stations?
A. Whilst this could be investigated there would be the same time and budget pressures to prepare an audio tape for each of the 118 polling stations.

Q. The terminology of campaign literature as well as official documentation was questioned in relation to "Plain English".
A. Ian indicated that many of the Notices/forms for the referendum this year had been re written with the hope of clarifying information but agreed to raise the Groups concerns.

Q. It was asked if polling staff received disability training.
A. Ian stated that training for all polling staff was provided and this training included disability awareness training. He added that he would ensure that future training for polling staff would continue to include sections on disability awareness.

Q. Within the voting registration forms etc received by prospective voters, are the aids available listed within this information?
A. Not at present but this is a valid point and Ian would look to see whether the form could be changed to accommodate this.

Q. The size of the aperture on the voting box was questioned as to whether there is ever any problems.

A. It was stated that it can't be too big due to security reasons and white markers are placed on the opening to make it easier to see the gap. Ian was unaware of any problems otherwise.

Peter thanked Ian and asked if he would like to join the group for refreshments.

1. The minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on Wednesday 10th August were accepted as a true record.
2. Matters arising:
   a) Surveys were returned to the secretary to prepare the collated information for the group's web pages within the Carlisle City Council's web site. The secretary proposed that the site be prepared to launch week commencing the 3rd October with the press releases going out that week.
   b) The group were asked if they would prefer entertainment or a tour of the Roman Frontier Gallery at the Civic Reception celebrating the group's 21'st anniversary. It was decided that the preference would be for the tour.

3. The existing officers had indicated to the secretary prior to the meeting that they were prepared to continue their roles within the group. The group was asked if anyone wished to put their name forward to be considered for the election of officers at the AGM. It was also indicated that members could notify the secretary after the meeting if they so wished.

   At present no expressions of interest have been received to be considered for any of the officers posts. No voting forms have therefore been sent out to members. If the current officers remain unopposed at the AGM it will only be necessary to propose and second the existing members to retain their positions.

4. The secretary requested the group's views regarding parking tickets in car parks with regard to the three hours free parking i.e. Devonshire Walk.

   The discussions concluded that under the current system (3 hours free parking) the best option would be to purchase anticipated additional hours parking when the vehicle is parked. The traffic warden would note the blue badge and add these hours onto the three free ones to calculate the expiry time instead of using the expiry time shown on the purchased ticket. It is up to the parking department to relay this information in plain English within appropriate signage.

   The secretary informed the group that Carlisle City Council will be implementing a "phone and pay" system by Christmas within the car parks. The above issue will be resolved for those using this system as it will record the appropriate expiry time.
5. Any other business – None

6. Date of next meeting – AGM 12th October 2011 - Tullie House – 1.30pm