
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2011

EX.138/11 REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS (Non Key Decision)

(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 Governance and Resources

Subject Matter

The Assistant Director (Governance) submitted report GD.61/11 presenting the results of the annual review of polling arrangements as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983. He informed Members that all City Councillors had been consulted on the polling arrangements in their particular wards; the two local MPs and persons appointed as Election Agents in recent elections had been consulted; and the views of the Carlisle Access Group had been sought with regard to polling arrangements. Details of the statutory provisions and the criteria which had been used in carrying out the review were provided.

As Members were also aware, a number of separate and unconnected reviews of electoral arrangements were ongoing, or requested, including the Review of the Cumbria County Council, which was being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Review of Parliamentary Boundaries being carried out by the Boundary Commission for England. In addition, the City Council had in April 2011 requested the Local 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 Commission had indicated that, due to the number of reviews currently ongoing or planned, it had been necessary to prioritise the requests and, as Carlisle did not meet the further electoral review criteria, it was unlikely that any review of the City Council electoral arrangements would take place in the current or the next financial year.

The Assistant Director (Governance) drew Members' attention to the use of mobile polling stations and the use of houses / schools as polling places, commenting that Riverside Carlisle was no longer able to let their properties be used for election purposes due to the need to minimise the length of time properties were vacant between lettings.

He added that, in the light of concerns and 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 eleven Schools within the Council's area were used as polling venues.

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.

The Assistant Director (Governance) then reported in more detail on suggested changes in voting arrangements for the Belle Vue, Burgh, Harraby, Morton and Stanwix Urban Wards. He further recommended that the Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors and the Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the elections in 2011 if the usual premises proved to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations contained within the report.

Summary of options rejected a number of options set out in Report GD.61/11 – Review of Polling Arrangements

DECISION

That Report GD.61/11 and the recommendations therein be referred to Council for consideration, the recommendations being :

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	Irthington	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.

Reasons for Decision

To carry out a review of the Council's polling arrangements.