**South Ayrshire Council Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023 Returning Officer Submission**

1. South Ayrshire Council is undertaking a review of polling districts and polling places as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. The review is carried out by the Council in accordance with legislation and guidance issued by The Electoral Commission.

2. The purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors within the UK Parliamentary Constituencies of Central Ayrshire and Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock (South Ayrshire Council area)``have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that as far as possible the accessibility needs of people with disabilities have been considered and met when designating polling places.

3. The polling district refers to the geographical area, while the polling place is the building where electors cast their vote. The vast majority of polling places identified within the review have been used for many years and no issues have been identified. However, following a review and consideration of alternative locations it is proposed that 2 polling places are changed to alternative locations.

4. In making comments on these polling places and districts, I have considered feedback from the election team, from staff working at these polling places, from voters, candidates, agents and from the general public.

5. All of the polling places listed have been evaluated in accordance with Electoral Commission Guidance as to their suitability having regard to location, size, accessibility and availability. Consideration has also been given to ability to accommodate multiple polling stations where necessary.

6. The legislation specifies that local authority schools may be used free of charge as polling places. Schools are often centrally located in communities, accessible via public transport and able to provide disabled parking. Where schools are designated as polling places, and the poll is scheduled within a fixed term calendar, polling day is designated as an In-Service day to minimise disruption. When a poll is unscheduled, arrangements are put in place to ensure that where possible, schools are able to remain open.

**Proposals**

7. As Returning Officer, I confirm that I am in agreement with the proposed polling places, and polling district changes as summarised below, on the basis that these proposed alternatives are designed to benefit voters and those undertaking polling duties.

• ***Ward 1 – Troon***

 No changes proposed.

• ***Ward 2 – Prestwick***

 St Ninian’s Primary School is no longer available as a polling place following the creation of the Prestwick North Education Campus. It is proposed that the polling place is now located in Prestwick North Education Campus. There will be no requirement to close the school in the event of an unplanned election.

• ***Ward 3 – Ayr North***

 No changes to polling places are proposed however it is proposed to redraw polling district boundaries as follows:

• The boundary for polling district S304 will terminate in the middle of Whitletts Road and the following properties will move to polling district Ayr Dalmilling (S307):

* Braehead Avenue – 36 Properties
* Braehead Crescent – 10 Properties
* Gemmell Court – 12 Properties
* Gemmell Crescent – 21 Properties
* Whitletts Road 4-54 – 26 Properties

 The boundary for polling district Ayr Dalmilling (S307) will be extended to include the houses being built on the former Mainholm Academy site and the properties currently within S304 (as detailed above)

• ***Ward 4 – Ayr East***

 The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Hall is no longer available as a polling place and it is proposed that Kyle Academy is now used. There will be no requirement to close the school in the event of an unplanned election.

• ***Ward 5 – Ayr West***

 No changes proposed

• ***Ward 6 – Kyle***

 No changes proposed.

• ***Ward 7 – Maybole, North Carrick and Coylton***

 No changes proposed

• ***Ward 8 – Girvan and South Carrick***

 No changes proposed

8. I confirm my agreement that all other polling places and polling districts should remain as set out within the polling scheme for the Local Government Election in May 2022.

9. I look forward to hearing the views of voters within South Ayrshire over the coming weeks.

Mike Newall

Returning Officer

16 November 2023