
ARRANGEMENTS FOR BY-ELECTION FOR SELKIRKSHIRE WARD

Report by Chief Executive

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

21 December 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information on the arrangements for the by-election to be held in the Selkirkshire Ward, following the resignation of Councillor Ballantyne.**
- 1.2 Councillor Ballantyne resigned from the Council with effect from 30 November 2017. The Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, has fixed the date of the by-election for the subsequent vacancy in the Selkirkshire Ward as Thursday 22 February 2018, with the count taking place – by electronic means – on Friday 23 February 2018, starting at 10.00 a.m. There will be 13 polling stations located at St Mary’s Hall, Cappercleuch; Boston Hall, Ettrick; Yarrow Village Hall; Kirkhope Village Hall; Philiphaugh Community Centre; Selkirk Parish Church Hall; Victoria Hall, Selkirk x 2; Ashkirk Village Hall; Lilliesleaf Village Hall; Midlem Village Hall; Bowden Village Hall; and Newtown Community Wing.
- 1.3 Early indications are that the cost for the by-election is likely to be between £25k and £28k.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 I recommend that the Council notes the following arrangements for the by-election for the Selkirkshire Ward:-**
 - (a) Polling Day is fixed as Thursday, 22 February 2018; and**
 - (b) the costs associated with the staffing, printing, supplies, venue hire, electronic equipment hire, and other expenses incurred by the Returning Officer, will be met from existing budget.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Councillor Michelle Ballantyne, member for the Selkirkshire Ward, submitted a letter of resignation to the Chief Executive on 28 November 2017, with her resignation taking effect from 30 November 2017. In terms of Section 37 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, an election to fill the vacancy has to be held within three months from the date of resignation and the day on which the poll is held is fixed by the Returning Officer.

4 BY-ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The Chief Executive is the designated Returning Officer for the Scottish Borders Council area and has fixed the date of poll for the by-election for the vacancy in the Selkirkshire Ward as Thursday 22 February 2018. There will be 13 polling stations in the Ward: St Mary's Hall, Cappercleuch; Boston Hall, Ettrick; Yarrow Village Hall; Kirkhope Village Hall; Philiphaugh Community Centre; Selkirk Parish Church Hall; Victoria Hall, Selkirk x 2; Ashkirk Village Hall; Lilliesleaf Village Hall; Midlem Village Hall; Bowden Village Hall; and Newtown Community Wing.
- 4.2 The Count – which will be an electronic count - will take place in the Chamber at Council Headquarters on Friday 23 February 2018, starting at 10.00 a.m. This will allow time on the Thursday night at Council Headquarters to receive the ballot boxes from the polling stations, check the ballot paper accounts, and verify those postal votes which have been handed in to polling stations during the day. Candidates and agents will be invited to be present on the Thursday evening.
- 4.3 The main dates within the by-election timetable in 2018 are:
- Publication of notice of election – not earlier than Thursday 4 January and not later than Monday 15 January
 - Deadline for the delivery of nomination papers – not later than 4.00 p.m. on Monday 22 January
 - Deadline for withdrawals of nomination – not later than 4.00 p.m. on Monday 22 January
 - Publication of notice of poll – as soon as practicable after 4.00 p.m. on Monday 22 January
 - Deadline for notification of appointment or polling and counting agents – Thursday 15 February
 - **Polling day – Thursday 22 February (7.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.)**
 - Count – Friday 23 February, starting at 10.00 a.m.
 - Last day to submit election spending returns – Friday 30 March

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

Early indications are that the cost for the by-election is likely to be between £25k and £28k. These costs include staffing; printing of poll cards, ballot papers and postal packs; venue hire and transport of equipment; electronic equipment hire for postal vote verification and the count; and other ancillary expenses. There was provision in the current year's Revenue budget for the local government election in May this year, and it is likely that the by-election costs can also be met from this heading, although it

may be necessary - depending on final costs - to cover some of these through virement from funds identified as part of the budget monitoring process.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

Under legislation, the Council must make arrangements to hold a by-election to fill the post vacated by Councillor Ballantyne. A risk assessment has been carried out as part of the normal election planning process.

5.3 Equalities

No adverse equality implications are anticipated as a result of the by-election.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental effects of preparing for and holding the by-election.

5.5 Carbon Management

There should be little impact on the Council's carbon emissions from holding the by-election.

5.6 Rural Proofing

A rural proofing check is not required for the by-election.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, and the Service Director HR have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Tracey Logan
Chief Executive

Signature

Author(s)

| Name | Designation and Contact Number |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Jenny Wilkinson | Clerk to the Council, 01835 825004 |

Background Papers: Nil.

Previous Minute Reference: N/A

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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