
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	11 August 2015
Report By:	The Head of Legal and Property Services	Report No:	LP/117/15
Contact Officer:	Peter MacDonald	Contact No:	2618
Subject:	2015 Inverclyde Community Council Elections		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval of a timetable for community council elections in the Inverclyde area (the 2015 Inverclyde Community Council Elections) and to appoint the Chief Executive as Returning Officer for those elections.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The four year term of the community councils in Inverclyde is coming to an end, with the previous elections having been held in September to October 2011. In terms of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Inverclyde, the Council therefore requires to hold elections during the course of this year in line with that four year term.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the elections be held in the period from September to November this year, in accordance with the Election Timetable included at Appendix 1 and that the Chief Executive be appointed as Returning Officer to administer these elections.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 3.1 appoints the Chief Executive to act as Returning Officer for the 2015 Inverclyde Community Council Elections and delegates authority to him to administer these on the Council's behalf; and
- 3.2 notes and approves the Provisional Election Timetable as shown at Appendix 1 and delegates authority the Chief Executive (as Returning Officer) to make such changes to this timetable as are considered appropriate for the effective administration of the election.

Gerard Malone
Head of Legal and Property Services.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its meeting of 14 April 2011, the Inverclyde Council adopted the current Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in Inverclyde (the Scheme). The first elections under the Scheme were held in the period from September to October of 2011.
- 4.2 In terms of Part 7 of the Scheme elections for the community councils are to be held on a four yearly cycle, on dates to be determined by the Council. The current community councils' term is therefore due to come to an end in the course of this year, and it is necessary for the Council to:
 - a) fix dates for the 2015 Inverclyde Community Council Elections; and
 - b) appoint a Returning Officer for the purposes of these elections.
- 4.3 Officers from Legal and Property Services and the Safer and Inclusive Communities Service are, in liaison with the current community councils, making the necessary practical arrangements for the holding of the elections. As part of this process, an Election Timetable has been prepared and is included in this report at Appendix 1 for the Committee's approval.
- 4.4 Forms for nomination as a member of a community council (Nomination Forms) will be made available on the Council website, from all Council libraries, from the Customer Service Centre and directly to the current community councils. Completed nomination forms (signed by a qualifying nominee and qualifying proposers and seconders) will require to be submitted to the Returning Officer by the Close of Nominations, as per the Proposed Election Timetable.
- 4.5 In terms of the Scheme, to be nominated as a member of a community council, or to act as a proposer or seconder on a Nomination Form, an individual must:
 - a) be resident in the community council area;
 - b) be named on the Electoral Register for the community council area;
 - c) be aged 16 or over; and
 - d) not currently be elected as a Member of this Council, or of the Scottish, UK or European parliaments.
- 4.6 In terms of the Scheme, there is maximum number of members for each community council. For each community council area, following the Close of Nominations:
 - a) if the number of validly nominated candidates is less than half the maximum number of members, no community council will be formed for that area;
 - b) if the number of validly nominated candidates is between the maximum and half the maximum numbers of members (inclusive) then the election for that area will be uncontested, and all the valid nominees will be elected as members of the community council, as from the date of close of nominations; and
 - c) if the number of validly nominated candidates is greater than the maximum number of members, then the election for that area will be contested and a ballot will be arranged in accordance with the Election Timetable.
- 4.7 Officers are liaising with each of the existing community councils to arrange availability of their usual meeting venues in line with their usual cycle of meetings, in order that:
 - a) for areas with a contested election, that venue may be used to host a poll; and
 - b) for areas with an uncontested election, that venue may be used for the first meeting of the newly formed community council.
- 4.8 In terms of the Scheme, to vote in a community council election, an individual must:
 - a) be resident in the community council area;
 - b) be named on the Electoral Register for the community council area; and
 - c) be aged 16 or over.
- 4.9 Any polls will proceed by way of secret ballot and voting in person. The elections will proceed

on a modified first past the post system, in that:

- a) voters will be allowed to make a number of votes (up to the maximum number of members for that community council) on one ballot paper; and
 - b) each vote will be of equal ranking.
- 4.10 Work is already underway in communities to promote participation in the upcoming elections. Community groups were briefed at cluster events facilitated by the CLD Service in June and this will be continued through further cluster events planned for August. Councillor Brennan will also support the engagement of communities in the elections in his capacity as Communities Champion. Potential candidates have been identified by CLD Service staff and are being encouraged to put themselves forward for election.
- 4.11 It is recognised, however, that there is a need to reach the wider community and plans are being developed to promote participation through the Council website, social and local media.
- 4.12 If for one or more of the community council areas a community council is not formed as part of this election process, the Council may issue a further call for nominations in respect of such areas within a period of 6 months from the date of the Close of Nominations in this first call. Should this circumstance arise, officers will submit a further report to the Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 5.1 Advertising costs will be incurred as part of the election process, but will be contained within existing budgets for community council funding. Similarly, staffing requirements for ballots held will be met from existing Council resources. It is not possible to accurately forecast the advertising costs or staffing requirements as the numbers of notices and ballots required will be dependent on the outcome of the nomination and election processes.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

- 5.2 The Council is required to administer community council elections in terms of the Scheme.

Human Resources

- 5.3 None.

Equalities

- 5.4 As it is open to any individual:
- residing in a community council area;
 - aged 16 or over; and
 - named on the Electoral Register for that area,
- to seek election as a member of that community council (subject to the comments at part d) of paragraph 4.5 above) **and** to vote in community council elections, these elections promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the communities.
- 5.5 Officers will take reasonable steps to make nomination forms are available in alternative formats on request. All venues for ballots will be reasonably accessible to members of the public.

Repopulation

- 5.6 None.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities and the Chief Financial Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Appendix 1

Election Timetable - 2015 Inverclyde Community Council Elections.

No	Task	Comment	Date
1	Appoint a Returning Officer and start the formal election process.		11/8/15
2	Make nomination forms available at libraries, online and directly to community councils.		not later than 2/9/15.
3	Notice of Election.	<p>Public notice online, in libraries, in the Customer Contact Centre and in the Greenock Telegraph inviting nominations.</p> <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details on how to obtain nomination forms; • the date and time of close of nominations; and • the dates of any polls that may be held. 	2/9/15
4	CLOSE OF NOMINATIONS	Nominations received later than the date and time of close will not be accepted.	4pm on 30/9/15
5	Notice of Validly Nominated Candidates.	Public notice online, in libraries and in the Customer Contact Centre.	As soon as practicable following 4.
6	Declaration of Result for uncontested community councils.	For community council areas where the number of validly nominated candidates is between the maximum number and half the maximum number of members (inclusive), public notice online, in libraries, in the Customer Contact Centre and in the Greenock Telegraph will confirm the formation and membership of the community council. This will include details of the first meeting to be held and, if practicable, will be combined with the notice at item 5 above.	Per 5.
7	Notice of Poll for contested community councils.	For community council areas where the number of validly nominated candidates exceeds the maximum number of members, public notice online	Per 5.

		<p>in libraries and in the in the Customer Contact Centre will confirm the place date and time at which a poll will be held, and a time and place in each case for a count.</p> <p>If practicable, this notice will be incorporated in the notice at item 5 above.</p>	
8	For contested community councils, last date for withdrawal of a nomination.		4pm 7 October 2015.
9	First meeting of uncontested community councils/polling date for contested community councils.	Officers are liaising with the each existing community council to arrange for these to take place in the normal cycle and venues for the community council meetings.	Mid October to late November 2015.
10	Count for contested community councils.	These will be held as soon as practicable following any poll, however where polls are held in close succession, the counts for more than one community council may be held on the same day.	As soon as practicable following 9.
11	Declaration of Result for contested elections.	Public notice online, in libraries, in the Customer Contact Centre and in the Greenock Telegraph. If practicable, this will include details of the first meeting to be held.	As soon as practicable following 10.
12	First meeting of contested community councils.	Officers are liaising with the community council to accommodate this in the normal cycle and venues for meetings.	Mid November to late December 2015.