



REPORT TO: THE MORAY COUNCIL ON 12 COTOBER 2016

SUBJECT: WARD BOUNDARY AND POLLING DISTRICT AMENDMENTS

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Council to note the forthcoming changes to local ward boundaries following review and adoption by Scottish Government and agree polling district amendments in Ward 3 - Buckie.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II(8) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to electoral boundaries.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council agree to:-

- (i) note the changes to ward boundaries which come into force at the 2017 Local Government elections; and**
- (ii) approve the creation of an additional polling district, and renumbering of existing polling districts, in Ward 3 Buckie.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During 2014-2016 the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) conducted the fifth period review into local government electoral arrangements including ward boundaries for all local authorities in Scotland.
- 3.2 The proposals for amended ward boundaries were previously reported to The Moray Council on 29 April 2015 (para 10 of the minute refers and summarised in Section 4 below) and following recommendation by the LGBCS have now been accepted by Scottish ministers. The amendments have been formalised by The Moray (Electoral Arrangements) Order 2016 which came into force on 30 September 2016.

- 3.3 The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Council to divide wards into polling districts and to designate polling places.

4. **AMENDMENTS TO MULTI-MEMBER WARD BOUNDARIES**

- 4.1 The new ward boundaries (Table 1) will come into effect for local government elections on or after 4 May 2017. These changes will appear in the new electoral register due to be published on 1 December 2016. This will allow pollcards to be prepared with the revised data and issued in mid-March for the forthcoming local government election.

Table 1: Overview of Ward Boundary amendments

Move from	Move to	No. of Properties affected	Current electorate	Area description
Ward 5 – Heldon and Laich (MM0505) Voted at Duffus Hall	Ward 6 – Elgin City North (MM0601) Voting at Bishopmill Hall	144	283	Birch Avenue, Duffus Crescent, Duffus Heights, Duffus Lane, Duffus Place, Kintrae Crescent, Kintrae Rise, Kintrae View and West Covesea Road, Elgin
Ward 4 – Fochabers Lhanbryde (MM0401) Voted at Lhanbryde Community Centre	Ward 7 – Elgin City South (MM0701) Voting at New Elgin and Ashgrove Hall	1	1	Burnside Cottage, Linkwood
Ward 4 – Fochabers Lhanbryde (MM0409) Voted at Clochan Hall	Ward 3 – Buckie (MM0302)* Voting at Buckpool Golf Club	6	9	1 – 6 Westerton Cottages, Arradoul

*All polling districts have had to be renumbered in Ward 3 – Buckie to accommodate the changes within this ward (see section 5)

5. **POLLING DISTRICT AMENDMENT**

- 5.1 In preparation for elections next year, the Returning Officer is required to consider the impact of the ward boundary amendments and the transfer of electors on existing polling districts and polling places.
- 5.2 **Wards 5 / 6 boundary amendment** - there is a transfer of approximately 283 electors between wards. These electors will be accommodated within the MM0601 polling district served by the polling place at Bishopmill Hall. The new total electorate of approx. 3,151 remains within the capacity for this

polling place and can accommodate further electors as new houses are completed in the development along Duffus Road.

- 5.3 **Ward 4 / 7 boundary amendment** – there is a transfer of 1 registered elector between wards, this elector will be accommodated within the MM0701 polling district served by the polling place at New Elgin and Ashgrove Hall.
- 5.4 **Ward 4 / 3 Boundary amendment** – there is a transfer of 9 electors between wards. These electors will be served by the local polling place based at Buckpool Golf Club; however they cannot be accommodated into the neighbouring polling district BM0301. This is due to the revision of the Scottish Parliamentary (SP) constituency boundary in 2011 which is coterminous with the current ward boundary, prior to its forthcoming amendment.
- 5.5 These 9 electors / 6 properties are within the Moray SP constituency and the properties within the neighbouring polling district BM0301 are part of the Banffshire and Buchan Coast SP constituency. For the purposes of the electoral register, an additional polling district will have to be created to differentiate the voters affected by this cross constituency issue. In addition existing polling districts in Ward 3 will be renumbered to accommodate this change within the register (Table 2).

Table 2: Proposed Amendments to Polling Districts in Ward 3 due to amended ward boundaries.

Polling Place		New Polling District	Polling Place	SP Constituency
BM0301 Buckpool - Arradoul	Buckpool Golf Club	BM0301 Buckpool - Arradoul	Buckpool Golf Club	Banffshire and Buchan Coast
BM0302 Buckie West	Buckie Methodist Church Hall	MM0302 Westerton - Arradoul		Moray
BM0303 Buckie East	North Church Hall	BM0303 Buckie West	Buckie Methodist Church Hall	Banffshire and Buchan Coast
BM0304 Buckie South	Royal British Legion Hall	BM0304 Buckie East	North Church Hall	
BM0305 Portessie	Portessie Methodist Church Hall	BM0305 Buckie South	Royal British Legion Hall	
BM0306 Findochty	Findochty Town Hall	BM0306 Portessie	Portessie Methodist Church Hall	
		BM0307 Findochty	Findochty Town Hall	

- 5.6 Whilst the creation of this small polling district is not ideal for administration, it is unavoidable. The Returning Officer will seek to have the SP constituency boundary amended to include these 6 properties at the next statutory review by the Boundary Commission for Scotland, expected by 2021.

- 5.7 In advance of the next election, the Elections Office will contact the affected households to raise awareness of the change of ward boundaries and polling places for these electors.

6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 - 2017**

Elections and electoral arrangements are part of community engagement and participation in their wider governance.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

The Moray (Electoral Arrangements) Order 2016 revises the ward boundaries for a local government election held on or after 4 May 2017. The revised boundaries have an impact on polling districts/places which the local authority is required to keep under review under the Representation of the People Act 1983.

(c) **Financial implications**

None arising from this report

(d) **Risk Implications**

Without the revision of polling districts, the ward boundary revisions cannot be included in the polling scheme for the forthcoming election.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

None arising from this report

(f) **Property**

As a result of ward boundary revisions, a number of residential properties as detailed in Section 4 will transfer between wards.

(g) **Equalities**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is responsible for considering the equalities issues arising from their review. With reference to polling districts amendment after consultation with the Equal Opportunities Officer it was determined that an Equalities Impact Assessment was not required for this report. In all cases noted above the new polling place assigned are closer in proximity than previous voting arrangements.

(h) **Consultations**

Consultation has been undertaken with representatives of the Electoral Registration Office at the Grampian Valuation Joint Board.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Following a recent review local government ward boundaries have been revised and it is recommended that the Council approve the proposed changes to polling districts in Ward 3 – Buckie to accommodate these revisions into local electoral arrangements.**

Author of Report: Alison Davidson, Elections Officer
Background Papers: Fifth Review of Local Government Electoral
Arrangements - 29 April 2015
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