

Title of Report: Closure of Omagh Electoral Office	Officer Presenting: Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer Author: As above
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To advise Members of correspondence received from NIPSA regarding the closure of the Omagh Electoral Office (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To seek Members' comments in relation to this correspondence.

2 Background

2.1 In October 2016, this Committee received a deputation from NIPSA regarding the proposal to close the Regional Electoral Offices. The Committee subsequently recommended (Min Ref GSP216/16) that:

- Council invites the Chief Electoral officer to meet with Council to answer Members concerns, and
- Supports the campaign to retain all local electoral offices.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The correspondence highlights the likely closure of Omagh Electoral Office and plans to move staff and services to this Council area.
- 3.2 NIPSA requests that the Council registers its concerns, seeking a postponement of any decision and also demands that electoral services are retained in Omagh.
- 3.3 It is also requested that Council contacts the Chief Electoral Officer, the Northern Ireland Office and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to have the necessary funds in place to provide for electoral services in Omagh.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications

- 4.1 It is noted that Council has not received confirmation or any other details in respect of these proposals.

- 4.2 In the event that there is a relocation of electoral services from Omagh to the local electoral office in the city, there may be a positive impact on the sustainability of local services.
- 4.3 It is contended by NIPSA that a closure of the Omagh office will have adverse implications for constituents and may impact on election results.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That subject to Members' comments and in line with the previous position of this Council, that correspondence is forwarded to Chief Electoral Officer, the Northern Ireland Office and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland seeking a postponement of any decision and requesting that the necessary funds are secured to provide for the continued provision of electoral services in Omagh.

Background Papers

GSP62/16 Correspondence from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland

GSP216/16 Deputation – NIPSA

GSP245/16 Future Delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland

GSP09/17 Future Delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland