

---

**Meeting:** General Purposes Committee  
**Date:** 20 November 2014  
**Subject:** Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report complies with the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 to undertake a review of polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2015.

---

**Advising Officer:** Melanie Clay, Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer  
**Contact Officer:** Brian Dunleavy, Democratic Services Manager  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** General Purposes Committee

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The recommendations support the Council priorities:

- Enhancing the local community.
- Value for money.

### **Financial:**

1. The number of polling stations as a result of the review will reduce overall by three and there will also be savings by replacing two portacabins with permanent premises. The review recommendations result in a reduction in costs relating to staffing and premises hire of approximately £3,700.

### **Legal:**

2. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty on all councils to review their UK parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 provides for this review to be carried out within the 16 month period beginning 1 October 2013. The review will be completed in time for the next Parliamentary elections in May 2015 and a review will be required to be completed every fifth year to coincide with Parliamentary elections.

### **Risk Management:**

3. None resulting from this report as we have secured sufficient polling stations to satisfy requirements for the effective management of an election

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Not Applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. The Council is required to make sure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, also having regard to the needs of electors who are disabled. All proposals ensure that, as far as is possible, polling places are consistent with the principle of ensuring fair and equitable access for all electors

**Public Health:**

6. Not Applicable

**Community Safety:**

7. All polling venues proposed have been assessed and meet Health and Safety requirements.

**Sustainability:**

8. Polling districts have been designated to ensure reasonable accessibility for voters in each polling district and to minimise, where possible, any adverse impacts on travel to these venues.

**Procurement:**

9. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations of the Acting Returning Officer in relation to the polling district and polling places as set out in Appendices A and C to this report.**

**Background**

10. When undertaking a review the Council is required to give due regard to the following considerations:
- It must seek to ensure that all electors in the area have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
  - It must seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to all electors.
11. Polling districts are, in effect, sub divisions of electoral wards. Each parish or parish ward is automatically a polling district in its own right but then that area can be broken down into further polling districts dependent on the size of the parish and the number and location of the electors.
12. Public notice of the start of the review was given on 21 October 2013. The closing date for submission of comments was 31 December 2013.

## **Consultation Process**

13. The review process required the Council to consult on the existing polling districts and polling places. Although the review is of polling districts and polling places, it is accepted that polling stations, which are chosen by the Returning Officer, are inexorably linked to the review and comments were invited on those proposed or suggested alternatives. This exercise sought representations from people or organisations with particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. The consultation also included all CBC councillors, MPs and MEPs, all parish/town councils, local political parties and Returning Officers for Parliamentary constituencies wholly or partly in the Council's area. An article was included in News Central and documents were published on the Council's website.
14. In addition, polling station inspectors at the European election held in May 2014 were asked to provide feedback regarding each of the current polling places.
15. A summary of the Acting Returning Officer's recommendations arising from the review is attached at Appendix A whilst the Acting Returning Officer's decisions regarding polling stations are set out in Appendix B.

## **Issues raised during the consultation process**

16. Various responses to the consultation were received. These have been evaluated to determine if changes are necessary as part of the review process and the evaluations are incorporated in the schedule set out at Appendix C.
17. Election officers have visited all proposed new polling station venues and consider them to be suitable.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

18. Once the Committee has agreed proposals, details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public. Specified interested parties may make representations to the Electoral Commission to reconsider any polling districts and polling places.
19. The new electoral register containing revised arrangements for polling districts will be published on 1 December 2014. New polling districts and polling places will become effective at elections held after this date.

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Summary of Acting Returning Officer's recommendations

Appendix B – Summary of Acting Returning Officer's decisions

Appendix C – 2013 and projected data, responses to consultee comments and Acting Returning Officer recommendations and decisions.

## **Background Papers: (open to public inspection)**

None