



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Reports

November 2023

### Polling Places, Polling Districts and Polling Stations Review 2023

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cabinet Member:</b>          | Cllr Nathan England - Cabinet Member: Finance, Customer Services & Governance |
| <b>Lead Director:</b>           | Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance                                   |
| <b>Service Area:</b>            | Policy & Governance                                                           |
| <b>Report Author:</b>           | Emily Ogram – Senior Democracy Officer (Elections)                            |
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| <b>Wards Affected:</b>          | All Wards                                                                     |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>            | Not Key Decision                                                              |
| <b>Forward Plan:</b>            | Not Applicable                                                                |
| <b>Report considered by:</b>    | Not Applicable                                                                |

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Boundary Review Committee: -

- 1.1 Approve the Returning Officer's Proposals with effect from 1 December 2023; and
- 1.2 Delegate authority to the Returning Officer or Director: Policy & Governance to make further changes, as necessary, to Polling places/Polling stations before the elections on 2 May 2024.

#### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The Council is required to complete a full review of its Parliamentary polling districts, polling places and polling stations every five years.

### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 The timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places is set by legislation. Compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.
- 3.2 The review should ensure that all electors shall have as reasonable facilities for voting as practicable and that all polling places should be accessible by electors with disabilities. Polling districts, polling places and polling stations arrangements consider the provisions of the Equalities Act, Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2013), Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Elections Act 2022.
- 3.3 The Returning Officer's initial recommendations were consolidated from the results of the interim review published earlier this year (following the LG BCE boundary changes) and feedback from the Local Elections in May 2023.
- 3.4 As part of the statutory review, a consultation period began on 10 October 2023 and closed on 31 October 2023. The Returning Officers initial recommendations and an interactive map of existing polling stations (including Parliamentary, Borough, and Parish Boundaries) was the subject of the consultation.
- 3.5 The consultation was circulated to all Borough Councillors, Parish/Town Clerks, Local Members of Parliament, Shropshire Council's Returning Officer, Polling Station Inspectors from the May 2023 Local Elections, and members of the Council's Making it Real Board. It was also included in the Community Newsletter publication by Community Services.
- 3.6 In addition to the compulsory review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places, the 2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies in England resulted in changes in both the Telford and the Wrekin Constituency. Once approved by the Privy Council, the new constituencies will be used for the next General election following that date. However, for any by-election that may take place beforehand, existing constituencies will be used. The new and existing constituencies are included in the Returning Officer's Proposals, and maps detailing the changes are included in **Appendix A**.

### **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 There are no current changes proposed to the existing provision.

4.2 Accessibility adjustments are required at the following Polling Station: -

| Borough Ward | Polling District | Polling Station                                                         |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| St Georges   | TSG              | St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council, London Road, St Georges, TF2 9JY |

Temporary measures will be in place on polling days, which will extend the width of the disabled parking bay, and a ramp will be installed at the premises.

4.3 In respect of the two polling stations set out below, in St Georges Ward, it may be that there are more suitable locations which will better serve electors. Work is continuing to identify all potential options in this respect. Councillors will note that it is recommended that Boundary Review Committee delegate authority to the Returning Officer to make any necessary changes to polling stations before elections in May 2024.

| Borough Ward | Polling District | Existing Polling Station                                                |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| St Georges   | TSG              | St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council, London Road, St Georges, TF2 9JY |
| St Georges   | TSP              | St Georges Methodist Church, Church Street, St Georges TF2 9JY          |

4.4 Consultation responses received are shown at **Appendix B** and the Returning Officer's Proposals are shown at **Appendix C**.

## 5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 No alternative options in respect of undertaking the review have been considered as this is a statutory requirement for the Council under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to ensure appropriate voting arrangements are in place for residents within the Borough in regard to polling districts and polling stations. Members may choose to recommend that the Returning Officer makes different changes to those proposed in Section 4 above, however the recommendations contained within this report are based on the consultation undertaken.

## 6.0 Key Risks

6.1 Without consultation on the proposals the Council would be in breach of legal requirement for conducting the polling places, districts, and stations review.

## **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 The recommendations of this report contribute towards the following Council Priority:

- Community focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective, and quality services.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 The costs of the review will be met from existing budgets.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 The Boundary Review Committee has delegated authority from Full Council to deal with all matters relating to polling places, polling districts and polling stations. The legislative background is set out within the body of the report.

## **10.0 Ward Implications**

10.1 All wards

## **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 There are no health, social or economic implications arising from this report.

## **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1 The review is required to ensure all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that every polling place is accessible for people who are disabled. As part of the identification process for suitable venues, the Making it Real board will be fully consulted and their views considered.

## **13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

13.1 There are no climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **14.0 Background Papers**

- 1 [2023 Review of Parliamentary constituencies](#)

## **15.0 Appendices**

- A New and Existing Parliamentary Constituencies
- B Consultation Responses
- C Returning Officers Proposals

**16.0 Report Sign Off**

| <b>Signed off by</b> | <b>Date sent</b> | <b>Date signed off</b> | <b>Initials</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Legal                | 08/11/2023       | 08/11/2023             | RP              |