

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE – 30 JULY 2019

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: GOVERNANCE, PROCUREMENT & COMMISSIONING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To review polling districts, polling places and polling stations in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the actions taken to date in respect of consultation for those proposals set out in section 5 of this report;
- 2.2 To approve those changes to Polling Stations set out in paragraph 5.10 subject to satisfactory inspections; and
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement and Commissioning, to take all necessary steps to conclude the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the Borough prior to a further report being brought to the Boundary Review Committee for approval on 3 October 2019.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes/No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes/No	All electors in the Borough.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	30 November 2019.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes/No	The financial impact of undertaking this statutory piece of work will be met from existing Elections Team budgets and ancillary costs (printing etc). No additional finance resource is required.

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes/No	<p>The Boundary Review Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to the polling districts, polling places and polling stations review.</p> <p>The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).</p> <p>The Review process, from the publication of notice of the review until the publication of the documents at the end, must take place within the specified period.</p> <p>Further legal advice will be given to the Boundary Review Committee as necessary during the consultation and final proposal decision making process. It is anticipated that final proposals will be presented to the meeting of the Boundary Review Committee on 3 October 2019.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes/No	<p>The opportunities and risks associated with any change following on from this consultation have been identified and assessed. Arrangements would be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified if required.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes/No	<p>The Borough-wide review has the potential to impact on all Borough wards.</p>

4. **SUMMARY**

- 4.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013) requires the Council to conduct a review of the polling districts, polling places and polling stations which must be completed by 31 January 2020. This report asks the Committee to note the action taken so far to comply with this statutory duty and to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Governance, Procurement and Commissioning complete the review before reporting back to the Committee prior to final adoption of any changes.

5. **BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The procedure for a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations is laid down in the Representation of People Act 1983.
- 5.2 The Act also lays down the guiding principles for any review. The Electoral Commission has also published guidance setting out how authorities should approach boundary reviews. These include ensuring that all electors in a constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and that every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled. The guiding principles go on to state that every parish should be in its own polling district, and that every polling place should be in its own polling district.
- 5.3 This Council is fortunate in that most of its polling stations are well-established and meet the Electoral Commission's guidelines for polling stations. This is down to the strong community support offered by Town and Parish Councils and community groups.
- 5.4 Due to the ongoing support from the wider community, the Council only utilises 3 temporary portacabin style polling stations and uses a very small number of schools. Use of schools is always carried out with engagement with the headteacher and this Council does not force closure of any school to accommodate elections team. Additionally, of the handful of schools used, some are able to continue to operate during polling day.
- 5.5 Prior to the commencement of the formal consultation, the Elections team undertook some work to assess all polling stations within the Borough. All Presiding Officers and all Polling Station Inspectors involved with the European election in late May 2019 were asked to complete a survey and provide feedback on the polling stations within the area. All of these surveys were returned. The elections team also reviewed those complaints received (albeit a small number) during past elections to identify any particular concerns regarding polling stations.
- 5.6 The Council initiated the statutory review by publishing a Notice of start of review on 1 July 2019. The Council also published the proposals for alterations made by the Returning Officer. The consultation period runs from 1 July 2019 to 30 July 2019. To assist with the consultation, the Elections team sought the assistance of the Council's community engagement team to seek engagement with disability support groups and disabled users. The community engagement team has confirmed that it has sought views from 2,000 groups and individuals. This includes a link to an interactive map of polling stations to assist users in identifying their local polling station.
- 5.7 Details of the review, and proposals, were also added to the Council's website. Again, this included an interactive map to assist users.
- 5.8 Comments have also been sought from the following:-
 - Town/Parish Councils
 - Each Borough Councillor
 - MPs for the Telford and Wrekin area

- 5.9 Copies of the proposals have also been deposited at Addenbrooke House and at Southwater for consideration inviting comments to be made.

Proposals

- 5.10 The Returning Officer has proposed only 4 changes, as set out in the table below:-

Current Polling Station	Proposed Polling Station	Reasons for change
Lawley Village Primary Academy, Lawley	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Lawley (although to be noted that no response to our correspondence has been received to date).	Complaints from parents regarding school closure.
Ketley Bank Community Centre, Main Road, Ketley Bank	Queenswood Primary School, Yates Way, Ketley Bank, TF2 0AZ	Potential that the building may be sold/leased in the future.
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, North Road, Wellington	Wellington Children's Centre, North Road, Wellington, TF1 3ES	To avoid the use of a school.
The Red Lion Annex, Holyhead, Wellington	Sir John Bayley Club, Haygate Road, Wellington	Due to accessibility problems and ongoing, unaddressed maintenance needs of current polling station.

- 5.11 Prior to deciding upon final proposals, the elections team will collate all comments and responses received during the consultation period. It will also undertake visits to all proposed new polling stations to assess the suitability of the new station and adherence to the Electoral Commission guidelines.
- 5.12 The Returning Officer will then consider his/her final proposals for reporting to the boundary Review Committee on 3 October 2019. If approved, the implementation date will be 30 November 2019.

6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Polling District – A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election. In England, each parish is to be a separate polling district. UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries cannot be changed by this review.

Polling Place – A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.

Polling Station – A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election. There may be more than one polling station in a polling place.

7. **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

7.1 The timetable for this Review is as follows:

Action	Timetable	Outline of action
Publication of Notice and commencement of the review Start of public consultation period	1 July 2019	To begin the review and await comments from the consultation
Closure of consultation period	30 July 2019	To conclude consultation. Report of initial proposals to Boundary Review Committee
Consideration of consultation responses	1 August 2019 – 31 August 2019	To consider responses gathered during consultation
Undertake visits to proposed new polling stations	1 August – 16 September 2019	To assess suitability of new proposals
Decide final proposals	16 September 2019 – 20 September 2019	To prepare final proposals
Final proposals considered at Boundary Review Committee	3 October 2019	Report to Members showing all correspondence from consultation to review and finalise at this meeting

8. **INFORMATION ATTACHED**

- 8.1 **Appendix A:** Notice of Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.
Appendix B: Returning Officer's draft proposals.
Appendix C: List of the polling stations currently used.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Electoral Commission – Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations`

Available at:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

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