



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Boundary Review Committee

11 February 2026

Interim Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2026

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Wards Affected: All wards

1.0 Recommendations for decision:

1.1 It is recommended that the Boundary Review Committee:-

- a) Agree to commence an interim review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations;
- b) Approve the draft Terms of Reference for the review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations attached at **Appendix A** of this report; and
- c) Approve the draft timetable attached at **Appendix B** attached to this report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Committee with proposals for undertaking a review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations and a draft timetable for undertaking that review.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to consider the information contained in this report and the accompanying Appendices in determining whether or not to commence a review.

3.0 Background

3.1 Every local authority with electoral responsibilities is required to undertake a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations every 5 years. The period in which such a review must be carried out is set out in legislation. Every statutory review must be carried out during a 16-month period commencing on 1 October in every fifth year from 2013. Telford & Wrekin Council last carried out a statutory review in November 2023. The proposals contained in this report are for the Council to undertake a non-statutory review, known as an interim review. The process for an interim review is the same as for a statutory review.

3.2 To assist Members, an explanation of each of the terms used in a review is set out below:-

Polling District – a polling district is a geographical area into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided – these are designated by the local authority;

Polling Place – a polling place is the building or area in which a polling stations will be located – these are decided by the local authority;

Polling Station – a polling station is the room(s) or area(s) within the polling place where the voting actually takes place – these are decided by the Returning Officer.

3.3 Any review should ensure that all electors have access to as reasonable facilities as practicable for the purpose of voting. Additionally, arrangements for polling districts, polling places and polling stations should take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, Representation of the People Act 1983, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Elections Act 2022. Regard should also be had to the guidance published by the Electoral Commission.

3.4 Members will know that the scheduled ordinary date of elections in Telford & Wrekin is 6 May 2027 and it is important that this work is completed so as to ensure that we have suitable polling stations in place for that election. In addition, Members will recall that a Community Governance Review has recently been undertaken which made changes to some Town and Parish Council areas and this means that a review is needed to ensure that our Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations reflect the new arrangements which will take effect at the May 2027 elections.

4.0 Summary of Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that this review will consider the arrangements in respect of every Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station with a particular focus on polling stations. At every election, polling station inspectors undertake a light touch review of each polling station that they visit. Through these reviews, the elections team has a broad understanding of any areas of focus for the review and these will be taken into account throughout this interim review.

4.2 The draft Terms of Reference attached at **Appendix A** explains in more detail, the matters that will form part of the review. They include:-

- The geographical boundary of polling districts;
- The names and references of polling districts;
- Whether or not there is a need to merge polling districts, create polling districts or delete polling districts;
- The polling place for each polling district;
- The suitability of polling places for each polling district;
- The suitability of polling stations within polling places;
- Any possible alternative polling places which may be more suitable or more convenient than existing polling places or stations;
- The suitability of any potential polling places and stations where there are any changes to polling districts.

4.3 It is important that, throughout the review, the Council seeks views from residents across the Borough to help the Committee inform its final decisions regarding the designation of Polling Districts and Polling Places.

4.4 Legislation and guidance sets out some statutory consultees but it is intended to extend this engagement to ensure that those who wish to have the ability to express their views. As well as seeking view from residents, it is intended that the review will include consultation with:-

- Local Members of Parliament;
- Shropshire Council's Returning Officer;
- Borough Councillors;
- Town and Parish Councils (via their Clerks);
- Polling Station Inspectors;
- Members of the Council's Making it Real Board;
- Community Groups across Telford & Wrekin, through the Community Services Team.

It is also proposed that this will be supported through a social media campaign and communication with local press outlets.

4.5 In addition, it is proposed that Committee members will be invited to visit some of our polling stations to understand the factors that are taken into account when undertaking a review.

4.6 It should be noted that, for many years, steps have been taken to avoid the use of schools as polling stations wherever possible. Whilst the legislation regarding elections provides the Returning Officer with the power to use schools, it has long been the case that we endeavour to explore all other options before resorting to the use of a school.

- 4.7 Additionally, wherever possible, the use of temporary portacabin style accommodation is avoided. This is partially due to the fact that portacabins can be in demand during key elections, the additional costs arising out of the use of such accommodation and the fact that they can present additional challenges in terms of accessibility and staff welfare. Regrettably, given the need to provide a polling station in every polling district, there are some occasions when the use of schools or portacabins is unavoidable due to a lack of suitable buildings in those areas. This interim review provides us with a further opportunity to address those instances where we haven't been able to avoid their use. It should be noted, however, that during some elections the planned polling stations have not been available for use and, therefore, it has been necessary to revert to either a school building or the use of a portacabin on a temporary basis.
- 4.8 The draft indicative timetable is attached at **Appendix B** to this report. Members will see that it is intended that the interim review is formally commenced with the publication of a "Notice of Review". It is intended that this will be published on, or around, Monday 23 February 2026 with the consultation closing 6 weeks later on Monday 6 April 2026. Officers are currently seeking to arrange a date for members of the Committee to visit Polling Stations on or around 25 February 2026 to enable feedback to be taken into account as part of the interim review.
- 4.9 After the consultation period has come to an end, a further report will be presented to the Committee before being reported to Full Council for adoption on 16 July 2026.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of this Interim Review will be delivered from existing budgets. There may be financial implications in respect of the cost of polling stations during an election. Further advice will be provided in respect of this when the proposals regarding polling districts, polling places and polling stations are known.

6.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 6.1 The legal implications are as set out in this report.

7.0 Ward Implications

- 7.1 The final arrangements decided upon by the Boundary Review Committee will affect every ward within the Borough. However, the Interim Review is needed to ensure that electoral arrangements remain convenient and polling stations are accessible for electors.

8.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 8.1 Matters relating to health, social and economic implications will be considered when proposals are shaped as it will be necessary to have identified proposed polling places and polling stations. This will also be informed through the activity taking place during the consultation period, such as seeking views from disability representative groups.

9.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

9.1 Through the application of the legislation and guidance surrounding reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations, equality and diversity implications will be considered as proposals are shaped. Additionally, the consultation activity will allow more detailed consideration of such matters as proposals are shaped.

10.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

11.0 Background Papers

There are no background papers relating to this report.

12.0 Appendices

- A Draft Terms of Reference
- B Draft Indicative Timetable

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	03/02/2026	03/02/2026	RP
Finance	03/02/2026	03/02/2026	MLB