



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2021
Meeting of:	Council
Date:	28 February 2022
Is this an Executive Decision:	NO
Is this a Key Decision:	YES
Is the Report Confidential:	NO
If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:	[]
Essential Signatories: ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE Monitoring Officer: Chris Ebberley Date 7 January 2022 Signature Chief Finance Officer: Sal Khan Date 12 January 2022 Signature	

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Date: 28th February 2022

REPORT TITLE: Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

PORTFOLIO: Leader of the Council

HEAD OF SERVICE: Andy O'Brien - Returning Officer

CONTACT OFFICER: Nicky Gilligan Ext. No. 1332

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To report on the responses to consultation and make recommendations in respect of the review of polling districts and polling places, and to seek approval of such.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council is required to undertake a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations following a Boundary Review with a view to establishing their suitability. There is no requirement to change any of the current arrangements but any 'no change' decision must be fully justified as part of the overall proposals.

3. Background

- 3.1. Section 18C (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013), places a duty on all Local Authorities to review all UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places in their area after a Boundary Review and at least once

every four years.

3.1.1. The Council's current scheme of polling districts and places was adopted following a full review in 2003 when the new ward boundaries for the Borough took effect.

3.1.2. A full boundary review was undertaken during 2020/21 the results of which are to be implemented with effect from May 2023.

4. Contribution to Corporate Priorities

4.1. This review contributes to the Corporate Plan objective *Value for Money Council Services - protecting your money*. There is a corporate plan target to complete the Polling District Review following a Boundary Review (VFM03).

5. Report

5.1. The formal consultation period ran from 1 November to 30 November.

5.1.1. A public notice giving notice of the review was placed on the Council's website and at Burton Town Hall. In addition, specific consultations were undertaken on the existing scheme of polling districts and places with comments being sought from the relevant Returning Officers, all East Staffordshire Borough Councillors, parish/town councils, political parties, Staffordshire County Council and groups with a particular interest and expertise in relation to access to premises for persons who have different forms of disability. These parties were informed of the review via email.

5.1.2. The responses to the consultation are set out in **appendix A** to this report.

5.1.3. The appendix provides details of the polling district, ward and polling place and sets out any specific comments received in response to the consultation and identifies any action proposed.

5.1.4. A number of schools are currently used for polling stations in the area and the Council's aim to seek alternative premises is ongoing. The schools which remain on the list for future use are the only suitable premises in those areas and therefore will continue to be used.

5.1.5. As can be seen from the appendix, the response to the consultation has been very limited. It is disappointing to note that no response has been received from members of the public or from organisations representing people with disabilities.

5.1.6. Only one parish council has commented, they have indicated that they are not satisfied with the proposed change.

5.1.7. Following each Election Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors provide a risk assessment of each Polling Place and consideration is given to their observations. This approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also risks will still exist which have not been identified. However, based on the information provided, it is the officers

opinion that the significant risks have been identified, assessed and arrangements are in place to manage them effectively.

5.1.8. The impact over the next four years with regard to residential development has been examined in relation to the current provision of polling places/stations. It is considered that the immediate growth will be predominately in Burton and surrounding area, but there is significant development planned for Uttoxeter. However it is considered that there will be sufficient capacity in the existing polling places/stations, although in the longer term it may be necessary to increase the number of polling staff assigned to some of the polling stations.

5.1.9. The polling districts/places and stations in the affected wards will be kept under review and it is recommended that reviews be carried out on a more frequent basis than the statutory four yearly cycle.

6. Financial Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Lisa Turner

6.1. There will be an increase of £80 in hire costs by moving to the two new Polling Stations. The current stations hire fees are £190, by moving to the more suitable premises the hire fees will increase to £270. Currently in the Borough the cheapest Polling Station costs £35 to hire and the most expensive is £700.

7. Risk Assessment and Management

7.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

7.2. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

7.2.1. To facilitate a smooth Election process.

7.3. **Negative** (Threats):

7.3.1. If changes are made it may make voting at certain polling stations more difficult than necessary.

7.4. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register

8. Legal Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team: Caroline Elwood

8.1. The provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) sets out the procedure for the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations and requires each Local Authority to carry out regular reviews. The Act itself is supplemented by best practice guidance from the Electoral Commission.

9. **Equalities and Health**

9.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required. Polling places have already been accessed for accessibility when they are hired for voting. This process is ongoing, both Polling Station Inspectors and Polling Station Staff are asked at the time of each Election if the premises remain suitable.

9.2. **Health impacts:** An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

10. **Human Rights**

10.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

11. **Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

11.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) N/A

11.2. Please detail any positive/negative aspects:

11.2.1. Positive (Opportunities/Benefits

11.2.2. Negative (threats)

12. **Recommendations**

12.1. That the responses to the consultation on the Polling District Review be noted and the recommendations set out in the appendix are approved.

12.2. That two changes are to be made to the existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

13. **Background Papers**

13.1. Letters & emails received in response to the consultation process.

14. **Appendices**

14.1. Appendix A – List of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.