Review of polling districts and polling places 2023

Background

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each polling district.

- “polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards may be sub-divided;
- “polling places” are the buildings or areas where electors in a polling district go to vote;
- “polling stations” are the issuing desks in the building or area which is designated the polling place.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

In June 2023 the Boundary Commission for England concluded their review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. Once the Orders for the new parliamentary constituencies have been made, by 1 November 2023, the new boundaries will be used for the next parliamentary election, which must take place before 28 January 2025.

It is important that the polling district and polling places review is carried out as early as possible, and that the Council has a polling scheme in place which reflects the new constituencies in time for the next parliamentary election as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner election on 2 May 2024.

Timing of the review

The compulsory polling districts and polling places review will commence on Monday 23 October 2023.

It is intended that alterations to polling districts be timed to coincide with the publication of the revised electoral register on 1 December 2023. This therefore requires a compact timetable, which has been outlined below:

Activity	**Date**
Publication of notice of review	Monday 23 October 2023
Formal consultation begins	Monday 23 October 2023
Formal consultation closes	Monday 20 November 2023
Council meeting	Thursday 30 November 2023
Publish electoral register (including any new/amended polling districts)	Friday 1 December 2023

The review process

The process for a polling district and polling places review is set out in schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Council must:

- publish a notice of the holding of a review;
- consult the Acting Returning Officer (ARO) for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area;
- publish all representations made by an ARO within 30 days of receipt;

- seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

On completion of the review, the Council must give reasons for its decisions and publish:

- all correspondence sent to an ARO in connection with the review;
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
- the minutes for any meeting held by the Council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;
- details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review;
- details of the places where the results of the review have been published.

The current polling scheme

The details of the current polling scheme, as well as the Acting Returning Officer's comments and suggested changes are included in Appendix 1.