

Polling Place Review

Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Council of the results of a recent review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations and seek approval for the implementation of the proposed changes.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the proposals for the scheme of polling districts and polling places set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

Reasons

- 3.1 Council has a statutory responsibility under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to review our polling districts and polling places.
- 3.2 A review must be conducted between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 under The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.
- 3.3 This review presents an opportunity to improve voting facilities for our electors and ensure our polling stations are accessible.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The proposals for future polling arrangements in Appendices 1 and 2 are based on recommendations made by the (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) following consultation.
- 4.2 Following the introduction of Voter Identification rules, the Electoral Commission reduced the recommended maximum electors per polling station from 2,500 to 2,250. All stations are expected to stay under the new limit over the lifetime of this review, assuming a 70 percent turnout.
- 4.3 The proposed arrangements would be effective 1 February 2024. A revised register of electors will be published on that date.

- 4.4 The number of polling districts has been reduced from 102 to 95. This reduction is because the boundaries no longer need to align with both current and historical ward boundaries. This reduction is due to the elimination of several small polling districts that form part of multiple stations under the current arrangements.
- 4.5 The next compulsory review must occur between 1 October 2028 and 31 January 2030. The council may review any district or polling place at any time.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Public consultation took place between 1 October 2023 and 31 December 2023. All representations received were considered when preparing the proposals in Appendix 1. Responses to the 'Let's Talk Derby' survey are set out in Appendix 5.
- 5.2 A total of 29 survey responses were received. 59% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals. 13% of respondents said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 5.3 Feedback on specific polling places is summarised in Appendix 1. Some feedback proposed alternative sites, which were considered.
- 5.4 Councillors were consulted during the review process. Their recommendations were considered and have contributed to the development of the final proposals.
- 5.5 Review details were sent to MPs, published on Let's Talk Derby and the council's website, and made available as hard copies with ward maps at the Council House.
- 5.6 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is included as Appendix 3. No significant impacts on people with protected characteristics were identified.

Other options

- 6.1 Options considered for individual polling districts and polling places are given in Appendix 1.
- 6.2 If a polling place becomes unavailable at short notice before an election the Returning Officer may designate an alternative.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 This review will result in no substantial change to the cost of holding elections.
- 7.2 The reduction in the number of polling stations is due to the elimination of some multiple stations. This will result in a small saving on staff costs, but not on venue hire costs.

Legal implications

- 8.1 This review complies with Schedule A1 of the Representation of The People Act 1983 and the council's obligations under The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

Climate implications

- 9.1 The Environment Agency's online tool was used to assess flood risk from rivers or surface water at each polling site. The following locations have above 'low' risk:
- All Nations for Christ Christian Fellowship
 - Chester Green Community Centre
 - Sunny Hill Community Centre
 - The Council House

The Returning Officer considers flood risk at sites in their election risk management plan.

- 9.2 This review results in several polling places being positioned closer the electorate they serve, which helps promote active travel such as walking or cycling.
- 9.3 A Climate Impact Assessment was conducted and is included as Appendix 4. No significant net positive or negative climate impact was identified.

Socio-Economic implications

- 10.1 Turnout rises when polling places are easy to travel to and access. This review considered these factors in each district to maximise voter participation.

Other significant implications

- 11.1 No other significant implications were identified.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal Services	21/12/2023
Finance	Janice Hadfield, Head of Finance	18/12/2023
Report sponsor	Emily Feenan, Director of Corporate Governance, Property and Procurement	18/12/2023
Other(s)	Alex Hough	15/12/2023

Background papers: None

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed scheme of polling places and polling districts
Appendix 2: Plans of proposed polling district boundaries
Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 4: Climate Impact Assessment
Appendix 5: Results of 'Let's Talk Derby' Survey