

Extraordinary Regulatory Services Committee
Thursday, 12 October 2023

PART I

Polling District and Polling Place Review 2023
(ADSPH)

1 Summary

1.1 To present to the Regulatory Committee the plan for the statutory polling district and polling place review of the district.

2 Details

2.1 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 district.

2.2 The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report:

2.2.1 "Polling districts" are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.

2.2.2 "Polling places" are the buildings or areas designated by the Council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.

2.2.3 "Polling stations" are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

2.3 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.

2.4 Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

2.5 The intention of the legislation was reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

2.6 The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 means:

2.6.1 the UK Parliament can be dissolved by the King on request of the Prime Minister, at any time within the 5 years of the life of the Parliament;

2.6.2 the next general election must take place before Tuesday 28 January 2025, but it could happen at any point before then;

2.6.3 there is no longer a link between the timing of the compulsory polling district and places review falling in a 16-month period ending 3 months before a scheduled general election.

2.7 In addition, the Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. The Commission has now published its

final recommendations and Orders for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries will be made by 1 November 2023.

- 2.8 Once the Orders for new parliamentary constituencies have been made, the new boundaries will be used for the next general election.
- 2.9 If a parliamentary by-election is called in the meantime, it would be run on existing boundaries.
- 2.10 These issues mean it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible, so that the Council has agreed polling districts and places to be used for the next parliamentary election, as well as the scheduled local elections and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024 and has a polling scheme in place which reflects the new constituencies.
- 2.11 Therefore, the notice required to commence the statutory review was published on Monday 2 October 2023.
- 2.12 It would be desirable for any changes in polling districts to be reflected in the electoral register published on 1 December 2023. However, due to consultation period and recruitment of a new Committee & Electoral Services Manager, it is unlikely that the review will be complete until January 2024.
- 2.13 This would mean that the electoral register would need to be republished to take account of any changes to polling districts.
- 2.14 This is the proposed timetable for the review:

Preparatory work	Started August 2023
Notice of review published	2 October 2023
Council proposals published	2 October 2023
Commencement of formal consultation	2 October 2023
End of formal consultation	10 November 2023
Consider consultation responses	By 24 November 2023
Publish electoral register	1 December 2023
Final proposals published through meeting agenda papers	TBC
Regulatory Services Committee meeting	TBC
Conclude review	By end January 2024
Republish electoral register (if any new or amended polling districts)	1 February 2023
Scheduled elections under new polling districts, places and stations scheme	2 May 2024

2.15 In December 2013, Council delegated to Regulatory Services Committee the approval of Polling Districts and Polling Places in respect of the District and Parish Wards. (Minute RG20/13 and CL59/13 [Regulatory Services] refer).

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Committee are asked to note and agree the timeline as detailed in 2.14.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

5 Financial, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

5.1 None specific.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 It is a statutory requirement to undertake a review of our polling districts and polling places within the timeframe of 1 October 2023 to 31 January 2025.

7 Recommendation

7.1 **That Committee are asked to note and comment on the timeline for the statutory review of polling districts and polling places.**

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