



Council

Thursday, 1 December 2022

Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

Report of the Chief Executive

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership,
Cllr S J Robinson**

1. Purpose of report

This report sets out proposals for revised polling districts and polling places following an interim periodic review required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and as a consequence of a review of the Borough Council's electoral arrangements undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a) Council approves the:
 - (i) proposals setting out changes to polling districts, polling places and polling stations; and
 - (ii) revised schedule of polling districts and polling places as set out in **Appendix 2**;
- b) Council requests the Chief Executive to formally publish the notice of the conclusion of the review and its findings; and
- c) the (Acting) Returning Officer be given authority to select an appropriate alternative polling place (if required). Formal retrospective approval be sought by Council following the election if appropriate.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To comply with the legislation requiring the Council to undertake periodic reviews of polling districts and polling places and to implement the new electoral arrangements determined by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
- 3.2. To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and that, as far as is reasonable and practicable, polling places are accessible to electors with disabilities.

4. Supporting Information

Reason for Review

- 4.1. In accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the Borough into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each of these districts. The legislation also requires every local authority to start and complete a review of its polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive). Subsequent reviews must be undertaken at least once every five years.
- 4.2. This interim review was required due to the changes made to the Borough Council's electoral arrangements following a review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The effect of that review was to abolish the existing electoral wards of the Borough of Rushcliffe, (effective for the next ordinary elections in 2023) and replace them with 24 new electoral wards.
- 4.3. A further ordinary review of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive) as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

Review Process

- 4.4. As required by the legislation, a public consultation period was held from Monday, 5 September 2022 to Friday, 21 October 2022, seeking the views and comments of electors, interested persons and any persons or bodies with expertise in access to premises or facilities for persons with any type of disability. The consultation also included all Borough Councillors, all Parish/Town Councils, and the Acting Returning Officer for the Newark Parliamentary Constituency, which includes some electoral areas within the Rushcliffe Borough.
- 4.5. During this period the Acting Returning Officer's proposals and maps of the proposed polling districts were published on the Council's website.

Requirements of the Review

- 4.6. When undertaking a review, the Council is required to give due regard to the following considerations:
 - It must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - It must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors with disabilities.
 - Where possible, the polling place should be in its own polling district.
 - Where possible, each parish should be a separate polling district.
 - No polling place should be shared by two wards.
 - Where possible, "natural" boundaries should be used, e.g. railways, major roads, etc.

- All properties in a minor road or estate should, ideally, be in the same polling district.
- Polling places should be “logical”; that is, electors should not have to pass another polling place to get to their own.

Consultation Responses

- 4.7. A summary of the consultation comments requesting changes to the polling places and polling districts is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.8. A total of 17 responses were received during the consultation period.
- 4.9. 11 of the 17 responses either supported the proposals or requested the retention of an existing polling place which is already included in the revised schedule of polling stations (see **Appendix 2**) and no further comment is made in respect of these responses.
- 4.10. The remaining six responses requested changes to polling places or a polling district in four electoral wards. Each of these responses has been evaluated to determine if changes are necessary as part of the review process by the Chief Executive taking into account her duties as a Returning Officer and proposals added in the **Appendix 3**.

Schedule of Polling Stations

- 4.11. If the proposed changes, as set out in the report, are agreed then it is necessary to revise the schedule of polling stations. As such a revised schedule of polling districts and polling stations is attached at **Appendix 2** for approval.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

These are set out in the considerations and proposals in **Appendix 3**.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. The Council is required by legislation to undertake periodic reviews of polling districts and polling places and to implement the outcome of the review of electoral arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Failure to undertake the review risks a legal challenge to future elections.
- 6.2. The completion of the review enables effective planning and organisation of the 2023 elections and to incorporate the alterations to the polling districts in a revised register of electors to be published on 1 February 2023.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

If changes are made to the polling districts and polling places then there could be a resource implication depending on the nature of the change. It is anticipated that these costs would be met from existing budgets.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications. The report supports compliance with legislation.

7.3. Equalities Implications

There is a requirement under the Act for authorities to give due regard to the accessibility of polling places to ensure electors with disabilities can vote in person should they desire to do so.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct Section 17 implications.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Undertaking the review of polling districts and polling places contributes to the Council's Corporate Priority "Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life" by enabling them to effectively engage in the democratic processes.
Efficient Services	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Efficient Services priority.
Sustainable Growth	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Sustainable Growth priority.
The Environment	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Environment priority.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

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- c) the (Acting) Returning Officer be given authority to select an appropriate alternative polling place (if required). Formal retrospective approval be sought by Council following the election if appropriate.

For more information contact:	Kath Marriott Chief Executive 0115 914 8291 kmariott@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	<p>Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places</p> <p>Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places guidance</p> <p>Acting Returning Officers Proposals</p> <p>Submissions to consultation received</p>
List of appendices:	<p>Appendix 1. Summary of Consultation Comments</p> <p>Appendix 2. Proposed Revised Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places</p> <p>Appendix 3. Proposals in Respect of Responses Received</p>