



Council

Thursday, 5 December 2024

Polling District and Polling Places Review

Report of the Chief Executive

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership,
Councillor N Clarke**

1. Purpose of report

This report sets out proposals for revised polling districts and polling places following a periodic review required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- a) Council approves the:
 - (i) proposals setting out changes to polling districts and polling places; 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 to be sought by Council following an 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.
- 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 disabled electors.

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.

Review Process

- 4.2. As required by the legislation, a public consultation period was held from Monday, 2 September 2024 to Friday, 18 October 2024 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.
- 4.3. During this period the Acting Returning Officer's proposals and maps of the proposed polling districts were published on the Council's website. These proposals contained the following suggested changes to the existing polling districts and polling places:
- In Compton Acres Ward, it is suggested to merge Polling Districts CAB3 and CAB4 given that both polling districts are allocated the same polling place for all polls and there is no reason for them to be kept separate. The Polling district would be renamed CAB3 and polling district CAB5 would then become CAB4.
 - In Lady Bay Ward, it is proposed to move polling places for polling district LBAD from All Hallows Halls to Lady Bay Scout Hall to help equalize the electorate for these polling places.
 - In Newton Ward, Upper Saxondale Village Hall is recommended as a permanent polling place for Upper Saxondale Parish which is a change from the Catalyst Church.
 - In Radcliffe on Trent Ward, St Mary's Church Hall is recommended as the new polling place for polling district RTM2, replacing the British Legion Hall which is no longer available as a polling place.
 - In Ruddington Ward, it is proposed to have an additional polling place of Jubilee Clubhouse, Loughborough Road for the exclusive use of the electors in RUFL polling district to help ease the demand on St Peter's Rooms due to the large number of electors that currently use this polling place. The Acting Returning Officer also asked for suggestions for an additional polling place for electors in polling district RUEA to also ease the demand on Ruddington Village Hall for the same reasons.

Requirements of the Review

- 4.4. 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 who are disabled.
- 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

- 4.5. A summary of the consultation comments requesting changes to the polling places and polling districts is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.6. A total of seven responses were received during the consultation period.
- 4.7. Six of the seven responses either supported the proposals or requested the retention of an existing polling place, which is already included in the revised schedule of polling places (see Appendix 2) and no further comment is made in respect of these responses.
- 4.8. The remaining response queried the reason we had identified Gamston Village Hall as having an access issue with a door frame threshold. Upon further investigation it is clear that the building is fully accessible, and the schedule has been updated to reflect this.

Schedule of Polling Places

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

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1 There was not any alternative options suggested as part of the consultation period with either no comments made, or agreements given to the Acting Returning Officer’s proposals.
- 5.2 It was not possible to find an additional polling place in Ruddington Ward for polling district RUEA for electors to use instead of Ruddington Village Hall despite enquiries being made with no suitable venue available within the polling district and therefore it was decided to recommend retaining Ruddington Village Hall as a polling place for both RUCA and RUEA polling districts at the present time.

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 2025 elections and to incorporate the alterations to the polling districts in a revised register of electors to be published on 1 January 2025.

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

The report supports compliance with relevant legislation.

7.3. Equalities Implications

There is a requirement under Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 for authorities to give due regard to the accessibility of polling places to ensure electors who are disabled 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.

7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

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| The Environment | The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Environment priority. |
| 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. |

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.

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