
Council

13 October 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor Townshend

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title: Polling District and Polling Place Review

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report details amendments to the polling district and polling place review scheme which was approved by Council on 14 January and 9 December 2014. The amendments are required due to some of the locations no longer being available and complaints received at the Elections in 2015. The Electoral Arrangements Panel and Ward members have been consulted. The consultation document was published on the Council's website as required by legislation.

Recommendations:

- 1) That Council considers and approves the revised polling district and polling place scheme, as detailed in the report, and
- 2) That if any further polling places become unavailable prior to the election that the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the appropriate Ward members agree temporary amendments to the scheme for the 2016 elections.

List of Appendices included:

- Appendix 1: Proposed amendments to the polling district and polling place scheme.
Appendix 2: Map detailing the suggested polling district boundaries for Lower Stoke ward with the future proposed polling district names.
Appendix 3: A report detailing the suggested roads/properties to be moved from one polling district to another.
Appendix 4: The Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.

Other useful background papers:

Polling District and Polling Place Review – Update Report to Council 14 January 2014.
<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s14623/Polling%20District%20Polling%20Place%20Review.pdf>
Polling District and Polling Place Review – Report to Council 9 December 2014

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes – Although this report has not been considered elsewhere, the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Electoral Arrangements Advisory Panel has reviewed and provided advice on the proposed changes

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 13 October 2015

Report title: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on all UK local authorities to review their parliamentary polling places within 18 months of a Parliamentary Election. The Council conducted its full review from 1 October 2013 and approved its revised scheme in January 2014. Following the elections in 2014 some amendments were required to the scheme which were approved by Council in December 2014.
- 1.2 During the elections in 2015 some issues arose in relation to some of the polling place locations and some of the venues no longer being available together with some complaints about one of the areas which has meant that certain areas have had to be reviewed again.
- 1.3 Section 18B RPA 1983 states the authority must designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area.
- 1.4 Paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 of RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, shall allocate electors to those polling stations, and those polling stations shall be in the polling place for that district.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 All the information relating to the Polling District and Polling Place Review was published on the Council's website for 4 weeks from beginning of September 2015.
- 2.2 During the consultation period all proposed polling stations were contacted to establish if they were available and suitable. All proposed locations are appropriate for use as polling stations.
- 2.3 Ward Councillors were also given the opportunity to consider the suggestions for alternative polling stations and polling district boundaries. No adverse comments were received to the proposals.
- 2.4 Attached at Appendix 1 are the amendments to the polling district and polling place scheme. It:-
 - confirms the current polling place and issues identified
 - recommends the future polling place for the polling district
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix 2 is the map detailing the suggested polling district boundaries for Lower Stoke ward concerned, with the future proposed polling district names.
- 2.6 Attached at Appendix 3 is a report detailing the suggested roads/properties to be moved from one polling district to another.
- 2.7 Attached at Appendix 4 is a report containing the Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.
- 2.8 Council is recommended to approve the revisions to the scheme detailed in the report. It is also recommended that delegation be given to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the ward members to make any temporary amendments to the scheme which may be required on the run up to the election.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The Review has taken into account comments received following the May 2015 elections and comments from ward councillors. No additional comments were received following the publication of information relating to the Polling District and Polling Place Review on the Council's website.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The register of electors is due to be published on 1 December which if approved will take account of the revised polling districts.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

- 5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

- 5.2 Legal implications

Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on all local authorities to review their parliamentary polling districts and polling places within 18 months of a Parliamentary Election. That requirement was met by the completion of the review approved by Council on 14th January 2014 with amendments to the scheme being approved in December 2014. The amendments proposed in this report reflect comments and issues identified during the elections which took place during 2015.

6. Other implications

- 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

An effective polling district and polling place scheme supports the Council Plan priority to encourage strong and involved communities.

- 6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The key risk associated with this report is related to electors not being aware of where they should go to vote if their polling station has changed. This is being dealt with by sending poll cards to all electors in the run up to an election.

- 6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

- 6.4 Equalities**

When assessing the location of polling places, accessibility issues have been included to ensure that all proposed polling stations have full access.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

| Contributor/ approver name | Title | Directorate or organisation | Date doc sent out | Date response received or approved |
|--|---|--|------------------------------|---|
| Adrian West | Members and Elections Team Manager | Resources | 23/9/15 | 24/9/15 |
| Martin Reeves | Chief Executive | Chief Executives | 23/9/15 | 24/9/15 |
| Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members) | | | | |
| Councillor Townshend | Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities | | 24/9/15 | 24/9/15 |