

Council

2 December 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor AS Khan

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of Law & Governance

**Ward(s) affected:**

All Wards

**Title: Polling District and Polling Place Review**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

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**Executive summary:**

This report seeks Council approval of the revised polling districts and polling place scheme for Coventry, in accordance with Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Review was required following the conclusion of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) review of electoral arrangements, which introduces new ward boundaries effective from the May 2026 elections.

The Council is legally required to ensure that polling districts and polling places align with the revised ward boundaries and continue to provide accessible and convenient voting facilities for all electors. The Review also addressed concerns from previous elections, including:

- Accessibility issues at existing polling stations, particularly portacabins, which often fail to meet minimum standards for wheelchair users despite investment in ramps and temporary infrastructure.
- Challenges associated with using schools as polling places, including restricted access and increased travel distances for electors.

- Rising venue hire costs and limited availability of suitable alternatives in some areas.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That Council considers and approves the revised polling district and polling place scheme, as detailed in the Appendices to this the report, and
- 2) That if any further polling places become unavailable prior to an election that the Director of Law & Governance be delegated authority, following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the appropriate Ward Councillors, to make amendments to the scheme as required.

**List of Appendices included:**

The following appendices are attached to the report:

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|-------------|--|
| Appendix 1: | Proposed revisions to the polling district and polling place scheme.   |
| Appendix 2: | Maps for each ward detailing the suggested polling district with the future proposed polling district names. |
| Appendix 3: | The Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.                                   |

**Background papers:**

Electoral Commission guidance on Polling District and Polling Place reviews - [Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations](#)

**Other useful documents**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

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

No – although all Ward Councillors have been consulted on the final recommendations.

**Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 2 December 2025

## Report title: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

### 1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. This Review is being undertaken in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) recent review of electoral arrangements for Coventry, which introduces new Ward boundaries effective from the May 2026 elections.
- 1.2. Under Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, local authorities are required to review their polling districts and polling places:
  - Every five years, and
  - Following any significant changes to electoral boundaries.
- 1.3. The Council is therefore legally obligated to conduct this review to ensure that polling arrangements align with the new Ward structure and continue to meet statutory requirements for accessibility and voter convenience.
- 1.4. The following definitions are used for the scope of the review:
  - Polling District – a geographical sub-division of an electoral area e.g. ward.
  - Polling Place – a geographical area in which a polling station is located. There is no legal definition of what a polling place is, it can be a street, or as wide as the whole district.
- 1.5. The Polling station premises is the responsibility of the Returning Officer and is not in the scope of the review.
- 1.6. Several contextual factors are influencing the scope of this review:
  - **Accessibility concerns**, particularly with portacabins, which often fail to meet standards for wheelchair users despite temporary adaptations.
  - **Cabinet Office recommendations** following a national call for evidence on barriers to voting, urging councils to strengthen consultation with disabled voters.
  - **Challenges with school-based polling stations**, including limited access and increased travel distances for electors.
  - **Security and cost issues** related to portacabins, including incidents of fire and theft, and their significantly higher cost compared to permanent buildings.
  - **Population growth** in areas with new housing developments and student accommodation, requiring forward planning for adequate polling provision.
  - **Feedback from recent elections** (May and July 2024), highlighting minor issues and the unavailability of some existing polling places.

### 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 6 weeks.

- 2.2 Ahead of the consultation period, all proposed polling stations were contacted for their views on the Review and to establish were any issues around the future use of the premises.
- 2.3 Meetings were held with Ward Councillors to provide the opportunity to consider the suggestions for alternative polling stations and polling district boundaries. Once the draft proposals were prepared they were then also sent to the Ward Councillors for comments. No adverse comments were received to the proposals.
- 2.4 Attached at Appendix 1 are the proposed amendments to the polling district and polling place scheme.
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix 2 are the maps detailing the suggested polling district boundaries for each Ward with the future proposed polling district names.
- 2.6 Attached at Appendix 3 is a report containing the Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.
- 2.7 Council is recommended to approve the revisions to the scheme detailed in the report. It is also recommended that authority be delegated to the Director of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader and the Ward Councillors, to make any amendments to the scheme which may be required on the run up to elections.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The Review considered feedback from the 2024 elections and Ward Councillors. Comments from some polling stations about future use of the premises were reviewed and, where possible, taken into account when preparing the final scheme. 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. A revised register of electors will need to be published on 1 January 2026 following approval of the revised scheme to implement the changes to the register in advance of the publication of the Notice of Election for 7 May 2026.

### **5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance**

#### **5.1. Financial Implications**

- 5.2. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5.3. Legal Implications**

- 5.4. 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 every five years and following any significant changes to electoral boundaries.
- 5.5. Paragraph 25(1) of Schedule 1 to the RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide sufficient numbers of polling stations and allot electors to those polling stations.

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?**

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

Provide commentary on how the proposals contribute to the Plan's Vision - **Working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here**" The three delivery priorities: Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities; Improving the economic prosperity of the city and regions; Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change The two enabling priorities: Continued financial sustainability of the Council; Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader

### **6.2. How is risk being managed?**

- 6.3. 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 detailing their polling station, there will also be some public awareness raising advising electors that the Wards have changed as well as some of the polling stations.

### **6.4. What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

### **6.5. Equalities / EIA?**

When assessing the location of polling places, accessibility issues have been included to ensure that all proposed polling stations have full access to voters with disabilities. An EIA has been completed.

### **6.6. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

None

### **6.7. Implications for partner organisations?**

None

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