

Report to: General Purposes Committee – 29 February 2024  
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Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To consider representations received during the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places and to recommend a final scheme to the Full Council for approval and adoption.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the proposals, as set out in the <b>Appendix</b> to the report, subject to any revisions put forward by the Committee, be recommended to the Full Council for approval.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	There is a statutory requirement to review the Councils scheme of polling districts, places and stations to ensure that all electors in the authority have reasonable facilities for voting which are practical given the local circumstances.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be carried out.
- 1.2 It is a requirement that local authorities undertake a compulsory review of their polling districts and polling places for UK parliamentary constituencies at least once every five years and prior to a Parliamentary Election. The last review was undertaken in 2019, so the review has been undertaken now given the time elapsed since the last review and it is anticipated that the next UK Parliamentary Election will be held at some point in 2024 (the last date such an election can be held is 28 January 2025).
- 1.3 Given there are scheduled elections taking place on Thursday 2 May 2024 (East Midlands Combined Authority Mayor and Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner) it was considered appropriate to undertake the review early in 2024 in order to have an agreed final scheme ahead of these scheduled polls.
- 1.4 The table below sets out the timetable for the review:

Publication of notice and consultation document – consultation opens	Monday 18 December 2023
Closing date for representations	Friday 16 February 2024

Report on representations to General Purposes Committee. General Purposes to recommend a final scheme to the Full Council	Thursday 29 February 2024
Full Council to agree final scheme	Thursday 7 March 2024

- 1.5 The requisite notice of review and consultation were published on the Council’s website in accordance with the review timetable and responses were invited from electors, Members, Parish and Town Councils and accessibility groups etc.

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 Following the nine-week consultation period, only one representation was received which was from an elector in the Parish of Norwell who made a case for retaining Norwell Village Hall as a polling station as the village was poorly served by public transport. Norwell Village Hall is an existing polling station with no proposal to change what is considered a suitable building.
- 2.2 As Members will see from the draft scheme which is attached as Appendix A to the report, there are three specific areas for which a resolution is sought in relation to polling stations. No representations were made or alternative suggestions made in relation to these during the consultation. These are as follows:

### **Bulcote (Lowdham District Ward: Polling District JB)**

The polling station used at the 2023 District & Parish Elections was a private dwelling. This dwelling has now been sold and is therefore no longer available for use as polling station. There are no alternative venues in the parish, and as such the draft scheme proposes to direct voters to Lowdham Village Hall until such time a replacement can be found. It is understood there is proposed future development in the parish which may bring about a community facility.

### **Winkburn (Southwell District Ward: Polling District SI)**

The polling station used at the 2023 District & Parish Elections was Winkburn School, but this is no longer considered suitable given its poor state of repair and poor facilities for staff. Two alternative venues have been identified within the parish, the Winkburn Micro-Brewery and Winkburn Learn2Print. Having assessed both options, the use of the Micro-Brewery is recommended.

### **Magnus Church of England Academy (Beacon District Ward: Polling District AD)**

This polling station has poor accessibility with poor staff facilities and is no longer considered as appropriate to serve this polling district. Potential options around alternative venues are being considered, with the preferred solution being to explore the possibility of a different location on the school site, but officers will also explore any alternative venues.

- 2.3 Any changes to polling stations will be advised to electors on their poll cards which are sent out prior to the poll, and in good time for electors to make an absent vote application if they cannot vote in person at the polling station.
- 2.4 The Committee are invited to consider the proposals, as contained in the Polling District Scheme, which will then be recommended to Full Council at their meeting to be held on 7 March 2024.
- 2.5 The General Purposes Committee issued a general delegation to the Returning Officer to make required changes to polling stations which become necessary following consultation with the Chair of the Committee and relevant Ward Members.

### **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

#### **Equalities Implications**

As part of the review, local authorities must consider the accessibility of potential polling stations when considering designating as a polling place. All electors should have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and so far as reasonable and practicable every polling place should be accessible to voters who are disabled.

#### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Commission Guidance

Responses received in respect of the Consultation