

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 23 rd January 2024
Report Subject	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations
Report Author	Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty to undertake a review of UK Parliamentary polling districts, polling places and polling places every five years. The current review had to be completed by 31st January 2025, but it was decided to conduct this early as the next UK Parliamentary general must take place before 28th January 2025 and is likely to take place in 2024.

This report sets out the final proposals for polling districts, polling places and polling stations following the review.

If there are any changes to polling district boundaries the Register of Electors will be re-published on 1st February 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council note the outcome of the review and the consultation undertaken.
2	That the final proposals detailed in Appendix 2 regarding polling districts, polling places and polling stations be approved.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS
1.01	The Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty to undertake a review of UK Parliamentary polling districts, polling places and polling places every five years. The current review had to be completed by 31 st January 2025.
1.02	Polling districts are, in effect, subdivisions of electoral wards. When designating polling districts, the local authority must seek to ensure that all the electors in the area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances. Responsibility for determining polling district boundaries lie with the Council itself.
1.03	<p>The following criteria has been adopted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The place for voting must be accessible for all electors, including those with disabilities.• Polling places should be within the polling district unless it is not possible to find a suitable place with the area.• The polling station should be easy to find and as close to electors as possible.
1.04	The Council is responsible for designating polling places, whereas authority for determining where the polling station should be within the polling place has been delegated to the Returning Officer. Typically, a school might be designated as the polling place, leaving the discretion to the Returning Officer to decide, in consultation with the school, the exact location of the polling station within the school premises.
1.05	Public notice of the review was published on the Council's website on 9 th October 2023. The consultation period closed on 17 th November 2023.
1.06	<p>Over 50 representations were received during the consultation period, mostly in support of the current arrangements.</p> <p>The following issues were either raised through the consultation process or already known –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A polling station for Broughton North East electoral ward, as it was raised that the community of Broughton would benefit from another polling place because of the size and electorate.2. The closure of Bistre Methodist Schoolroom, Spon Green, Buckley.3. Election issues and complaints that happen at each election using Hawkesbury Community Centre as a polling place.4. The closure of Presbyterian Church Hall, High Street, Caergwrle.5. The closure of St. Davids Church Hall, Mold Road, Connah's Quay6. The closure of Parkfields Community Centre, Park Avenue, Mold.7. A polling place for the area of Rhewl Mostyn.

	<p>8. No longer able to use St. John the Baptist School, Chester Road, Penymynydd and an alternative venue for the Youth Centre, Penyffordd.</p> <p>9. The closure of Shotton Community Centre, Plymouth Street, Shotton.</p>
1.07	The Acting Returning Officer Comments for the new Constituencies of Alyn & Deeside and Clwyd East were published on Monday 20 th November 2023 and can be found in Appendix 1.
1.08	The final proposals detailed in Appendix 2 have been identified for consideration. Once Council has agreed the proposals, details of the new polling districts, polling places and polling stations will be published.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications within this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>The formal consultation period ran from Monday 9th October 2023 to Friday 17th November 2023. A public notice was placed on the Council's website, giving notice of the review and full details of the review. In addition, the following specific consultations were undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) With Members of the Council, by way of an email dated 9th October and a reminder email was sent 14th November 2023. b) An email to each of the Members of Parliament with the explanatory information. c) An email to each of the Members of the Senedd for Alyn and Deeside, Delyn and North Wales region with the explanatory information. d) An email to each Town and Community Council with the explanatory information. e) An email to local known disability groups and interested parties with explanatory information. f) The Acting Returning Officer for the Alyn & Deeside and Delyn Constituencies with the same explanatory information.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	So far as possible venues for polling places have been selected that are reasonably central within the polling district to limit the need for electors to travel to them by car.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Acting Returning Officer’s Comments Appendix 2 – Final Proposals for Consideration

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 Public Notice of Review Flintshire County Council Consultation Document Contact Officer: Lynn Phillips, Team Leader – Democratic Services Telephone: 01352 702329 E-mail: lyn.phillips@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a constituency, district ward or division into smaller parts. Polling place is a building or area in which polling stations will be located. Polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place.