

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 27 th February 2020
Report Subject	Review of Polling Districts and Places
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 and Polling Places every five years. The current review had to be completed by 31 January 2020.

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

Any changes to polling district boundaries will now be implemented on the 1 December 2020 when the revised version of the Register of Electors will be published.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Council note the outcome of the review and the consultation undertaken.
2	That the final proposals detailed in Appendix 2 with regard to polling districts and polling places be approved.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES
1.01	<p>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 and Polling Places every five years. The current review had to be completed by 31 January 2020.</p>
1.02	<p>Polling districts are, in effect, sub divisions 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.</p>
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	<p>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.</p>
1.05	<p>Public notice of the review was published on the Council's website on 2 September 2019. The consultation period closed on 4 October 2019.</p>
1.06	<p>Over 38 representations were received during the consultation period, mostly in support of the current arrangements.</p> <p>The following issues were raised through the consultation process –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The proposed closure of Bistre Methodist Schoolroom, Spon Green, Buckley (sometime in 2020).2. Alternative venue for Holywell East and Holywell Central Electoral Wards. Holywell Town Council have suggested Ysgol Treffynnon.3. Building works at St. John the Baptist School, Chester Road, Penymynydd. Also representations were received from the Governing body, the school and working parents that because the school is closed on polling day, this disrupts pupils and working parents are left to find alternative costly childcare arrangements.4. The closure of Shotton Community Centre, Plymouth Street, Shotton.

1.07	The Acting Returning Officer Comments for the Constituencies of Alyn & Deeside and Delyn were published on Monday 7 October 2019 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 and polling places 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 2 September to Friday 4 October 2019. A public notice was placed on the Council's website and in local council offices and libraries, 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 2 September which gave details of the review and included, in particular, the Council's consultation document, schedule of existing polling districts and polling places, with their respective electorate and a questionnaire. b) An email to each of the Members of Parliament with the explanatory information. c) An email to each of the Assembly Members with the explanatory information. d) An email to each Town/Community Council with the explanatory information. e) 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 so as 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

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Lynn Phillips, Team Leader – Democratic Services Telephone: 01352 702329 E-mail: lyn.phillips@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	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.