

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER

Introduction

1. Under the Electoral Administration Act 2006, the Council is required to undertake and complete a review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the Borough by 31 December 2007.

Returning Officer's Duty

2. In this context, it is the Returning Officer's responsibility to comment on the suitability of existing and proposed polling stations, with regard to:-
 - accessibility for all electors, including those with any disability; and
 - the facilities for the required elections staff, tables, booths and notices.

Detail

3. I have therefore considered the suitability of both existing and proposed polling stations with these particular factors in mind.
4. The Borough's polling districts, polling places and polling stations are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Specific reviews were undertaken prior to the local elections in 2005 and 2007.
5. The review conducted prior to the 2007 elections was specifically concerned to minimise if not wholly eradicate, the use of mobile polling stations, given that they are not ideally suitable for either the electorate or the elections staff in terms of accessibility and the facilities which can be made available within them. Concerns, in these terms, have, in the past, been expressed about the use of mobiles, by both staff and the public. Insurance claims have also been made as a result of accidents occurring to members of the public when trying to gain access to mobiles.
6. It is essential, in my view, that wherever possible and practicable, the use of mobiles is avoided and public buildings, such as schools are utilised.
7. My detailed comments on individual polling stations, both existing and proposed, are set out in Appendix 4 to the proposed report to Cabinet/Council.
8. I am also aware of, and familiar with the proposed changes to the Village and Mandale and Victoria Wards, which result in boundary changes between polling districts MV2 and MV3. I would support those proposals.

D E Bond
Returning Officer
7 September 2007