

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting17th November 2022

1. Title of Item/Report

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022.

The report set out proposed changes for polling districts and places taking into account the submission of the Acting Returning Officer and feedback from consultation.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) identified Stockton-on-Tees as requiring an electoral review given the length of time since the last review was carried out.

The final recommendations confirm a Council size of 56 Councillors (the same number as there are now), 27 wards (one more than there are now) and changes to the boundaries of 23 wards with four remaining the same. In addition, as a result of the proposed new ward boundaries, revised parish electoral arrangements had been agreed for Billingham Town Council, Egglescliffe, Grindon and Thorpe Thewles, Ingleby Barwick, Kirklevington and Castlelevington and Thornaby.

An Order had been laid in Parliament and the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in May 2023.

As a result of changes to wards and boundaries, it had been necessary to conduct an interim polling district review.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a requirement to conduct reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. Although not a compulsory review, the same processes should be undertaken for an interim review. The next compulsory review must be started and completed between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

A Council's area is divided into polling districts with one or more districts

making up a ward, with a polling place being the area or building within a polling district in which a polling station is situated.

Polling districts needed to be revised to ensure that they are co-terminus with the new ward boundaries. In addition, the review has also considered:

- Polling Districts - Are they well defined? Do they follow natural boundaries? Are there suitable transport links? Are there any obstacles to crossing polling district boundaries?
- Polling Places – The location, size and accessibility of the polling place and its availability now and in the future
- Polling Stations – The suitability and accessibility of the room or area for use as a polling station. A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the Local Authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election

Electoral Commission Guidance was detailed within the report. In short, polling districts had needed to be re-drawn to reflect the needs of both existing and future ward boundaries. This would be achieved by establishing temporary polling districts for the period 1 December 2022 to 1 December 2023 which would then be merged into appropriate adjoining polling districts on publication of the Revised Register on 1 December 2023. The interim polling district review had therefore consulted on temporary and longer-term changes.

The Acting Returning Officer's submission was published on 21 September 2022 with a closing date for comments of 28 October 2022. The submission summarised the existing arrangements, proposals for temporary polling districts for the period 1 December 2022 to 1 December 2023 and proposals for how these temporary districts would then be merged into appropriate adjoining polling districts on publication of the Revised Register on 1 December 2023.

The Statutory Notice publicising the review was displayed / sent to:

- Libraries
- Website
- Parish Councils
- Community Centres

In addition, the Acting Returning Officer's submission was sent to:

- Website
- Libraries

- All Councillors
- MPs
- Parish Councils
- Area Partnerships
- Disability Groups/ BME/faith community via Catalyst

A table within the report contained a summary of the comments received and comments/revised proposals in response to the consultation feedback.

Final proposals of the Acting Returning Officer, following consultation, were attached to the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the changes to Polling Districts and Polling Places be approved.

3. Reasons for the Decision

A Polling District Review has been necessitated by changes to warding arrangements following an electoral review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

N/A

Proper Officer
21 November 2022