

## **Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places**

**Chair of Committee:** Cllr Ross Henley

**Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected:** All

**Executive Director:** Alyn Jones (Strategy, Workforce & Localities)

### **Executive Summary**

The report sets out the statutory requirement for the Council to undertake a Review of the Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places for the Council's area.

### **Recommendations**

To note the report and commence the review of the parliamentary polling districts and polling places.

### **Reasons for Proposals**

To comply with the statutory requirement to undertake a five-yearly review.

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## **Main report and supporting information**



### **Background and Purpose of Report**

1. Section 15 of the Representation of the People Act 1985 places a duty on local authorities to carry out and complete reviews of Parliamentary polling districts and polling places for all constituencies within their areas on a five-yearly basis over a sixteen-month period which commenced on 1 October 2023 and ends on 30 January 2025.
2. With the upcoming review of Somerset by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, it is considered that the Polling District and Polling Places review should be “light-touch” at this stage as it is distinctly possible that a further such review will be required to implement the LGBCE’s recommendations.
3. The report is to advise Members of the commencement of the Review, the outcome of which will be reported to the Committee for consideration and approval.
4. There will be two consultation periods during which comments can be submitted by the public, organisations etc prior to a final decision being made.

### **Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

5. None

### **Other options considered**

6. None

### **Key considerations for the Council**

#### **Scrutiny comments/recommendations:**

7. N/A

### **Consultation and Feedback**

8. N/A

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

9. N/A

### **Legal and Procurement Implications**

10. The statutory timetable must be adhered to.

### **HR / Workforce Implications**

11. This is a considerable piece of work which will require at least one member of staff to work full time on completing the review. The workload will greatly depend on comments received and the implications that are raised.

### **Equalities Implications**

12. It is important that, so far as is possible, the polling places that are identified are fully accessible and that there are no barriers to electors wishing to cast their votes in person.

### **Community Safety Implications**

13. There are no specific community safety implications in carrying out the review. There have not been any safety implications relating to recent elections in Somerset.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

14. It is always the objective to identify polling places which require minimal travel for electors. However, it is inevitable that in areas where there is little or no public transport, some electors will need to drive to polling places to vote.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

15. In attempting to identify accessible buildings as polling places, the health and safety implications will be minimised. It should, of course, be recognised that the majority of buildings that are used are not in the ownership of Somerset Council and therefore the maintenance levels can be variable.

### **Social Value**

16. It is important that polling districts and polling places recognise local areas and are essential to the community in giving electors the opportunity to cast their votes under the best possible conditions.

## Equality

17. The review will consider the accessibility of polling places and appropriate organisations will be consultees.

## Background Papers

18. [Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations | Electoral Commission](#)

## Appendices

- None