

Report To:	COUNCIL
Date:	16 SEPTEMBER 2024
Heading:	POLLING PLACES POST ELECTION REVIEW
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	NOT APPLICABLE
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

Following the UK Parliamentary General Election, held on the 4 July 2024, the Electoral Registration Team consulted with all Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks regarding the facilities used on Polling day. Feedback was also received from constituents who had visited the stations across the District.

As a result of the feedback received, five Polling Stations were highlighted for review following issues raised. These issues included distance from public transport, disabled access, room suitability and parking.

The Polling Places Review Working Group, as appointed by Council, met to review the issues and investigate whether any alternative locations could be explored to address the issues raised. This report sets out the issues raised, alternatives considered and proposed changes.

This report seeks Council approval to commence public consultation on the amendments to polling places as set out in the table below. The consultation period will begin on the 30 September 2024 and conclude on the 28 October 2024.

Recommendation(s)

That Council:

- a) Note the information contained in the report;
- b) Approves a public consultation exercise to commence on the 30 September 2024 and conclude on the 28 October 2024 to Polling Station SKG3 moving from the Bridge Baptist Church to the Fox and Crown Public House.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 Council's must complete a review of polling districts and polling places at least once every 5 years in a compulsory review period, the last full review was undertaken in 2023. Following the UK Parliamentary General Election, the Polling Places and Polling District Review Working Group have reviewed the feedback received on those currently approved stations and have given consideration to any alternatives available.

Alternative Options Considered

As detailed in the report and considered by the Polling Place and Polling District Review Working Group.

Detailed Information

The Polling Places Review Working Group reconvened on the 2nd of September 2024 to consider feedback received from constituents and Polling staff. In total 5 Polling stations were identified from the feedback for further review.

The issues raised included;

- Distance of the Polling Station from public transport facilities
- Disabled access into the Polling Station
- Accessibility and room suitability
- Parking facilities

The working group considered the issues raised and reviewed any suitable alternative stations within the boundaries. As a result of these discussions work has been undertaken by the Elections Team in contacting, reviewing and visiting viable locations taking into consideration;

- Size
- Disabled Accessibility
- Room suitability
- Location
- Parking
- Availability

Table 1A details the stations reviewed and the actions (if any) agreed. It also details the reasons for those actions. Of the 5 Polling Stations reviewed, the only station considered to have a suitable alternative location available is the Bridge Baptist Church (SKG3).

The alternative location agreed by the working group for consultation is the Fox and Crown Public House (Detailed in Appendix A).

If approved, consultation on SKG3 will commence on the 30 September and conclude on the 28 October 2024. This will then be reported back to Council for approval on the 25 November 2024.

Table 1A -

Polling Place	Comments	Proposed Alternative	Comments	Action Required
Brierley Forest Park Café & Visitor Centre HBR2	Complaint received in respect of the distance from the main road if using public transport. The property is accessed via a steep hill, the bus stop is located at the top of the hill.	Huthwaite Welfare Park Pavilion.	Unsuitable owing to size and access within the building.	No change.
		Huthwaite Methodist Church.	Parking was unsuitable.	
		Greek Orthodox Church.	No Response.	
Holy Cross Church Complex. HCE2.	Complaint received in respect of disabled access.	Green Dragon.	Site visit undertaken, unsuitable venue due to parking.	No change.
		Watnall Road Baptist Church.	Not available.	
Quarrydale Academy. DAL1 & DAL2.	Presiding Officer logged issues around accessibility.		Request made to Quarrydale to use a different room.	Negotiations are underway with Quarrydale to use a different room in the same location
The Bridge Baptist Church. SKG3.	Complaints received in respect of disabled access and parking for all electors.	Dalestorth School.	Dalestorth School cannot open to students if used as a polling station due to safeguarding issues.	Move Polling Station to the Fox and Crown Public House.
		Fox & Crown.	Suitable alternative location, good access and ample parking	
		B&Q.	Unsuitable.	
		Travelodge.	Suitable facilities but request denied.	

Kirkby Catholic Club. GSM4.	Polling Station Inspector reported issues relating to suitability and facilities for staff.	Trinity Methodist Church on Diamond Avenue.	Alternative considered but current location deemed more suitable.	No Change.
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Implications

Corporate Plan:

Enable thriving, prosperous and self-sufficient communities where people shape their own futures. Ensure effective community leadership, through good governance, transparency, accountability and appropriate behaviours.

Legal:

Every local authority is required to start and complete a review of its polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The last compulsory review took place in 2023 and was reported to Council in November 2023 with recommendations. This subsequent review follows the UK Parliamentary General Election in July 2024 and takes into consideration feedback received on the Polling Stations used. [RLD 12/09/2024]

Finance: No direct financial implications arising from this review. [PH 13/09/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Costs arising from the review can be met from existing budgets.
General Fund – Capital Programme	None
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to provide reasonable facilities to electors during an election period	The Polling Places Review Working Group, as approved by Council, convene to consider any required changes to current polling places based on user feedback and within the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013

Human Resources:

None identified

Environmental/Sustainability:

None identified

Equalities:

The review is to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and that, as far as is reasonable and practicable, polling places are accessible to disabled electors.

Other Implications:

None identified

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

None

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