

AMENDMENT

Name of meeting: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 15 November 2019

Title of report: Compulsory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations

A report regarding the review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations was considered and agreed by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on 13 September 2019 (the original report is attached to this report, **Appendix 1**).

Following information provided by the Gazetteer, anomalies have been identified within the (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) submission appended to the report. The anomalies relate to the details provided regarding the properties affected by the boundary changes in MF04/MF05 and DE02/DE03, please note the location of the proposed boundary changes remains unchanged.

A revised ARO submission is attached to this report at **Appendix 2**. The amended text is highlighted in yellow for the Committee's attention.

The Committee is asked to note the (Acting) Returning Officer's revised report.

In summary the amended information is as below:

MF04/MF05

Original ARO submission: there are three properties which this proposal affects (Dransfield Hall, Liley Farm and Liley Cottage).

Revised submission: there are four properties which this proposal affects (Dransfield Hill Cottage, Liley Hall, Liley Hall Farm and Little Benroyd).

DE02/DE03

Original Submission Street Listing (page 8 AROs submission):

High Street, property numbers 164 -180 should read 164 -184

Leeds Road, property numbers 406-672 should read 402-672

All other information remains the same. All Ward councillors and relevant stakeholders have been made aware of the above.

The original report indicated that the Electoral Registration Officer would make appropriate amendments to the Register of Electors in relation to the alteration of polling district boundaries referred to in the (Acting) Returning Officer's submission on publication of the next annual electoral register.

However, since that time a snap UK Parliamentary Election has been called. Should the boundary amendments be implemented on publication of the register on 1 December 2019 (prior to the date of the poll), the boundary amendments would change the location of polling

station for all electors residing in the properties affected. This has the potential to cause confusion, as legislation requires that poll cards (based upon existing boundaries) are sent out in advance of the election (on or around 11 November). Please note that all of the boundary amendments proposed are contained within the same constituency area.

To avoid any unnecessary confusion to the electors it is therefore proposed to implement the amendments to boundaries on 1 February 2020.

Name of meeting: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 13 September 2019

Title of report: Compulsory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations

Purpose of report

The Council is required, periodically, to undertake a review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations. The (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals in connection with the review (undertaken by Electoral Services) are set out in the attached report (Appendix 1).

The Committee is asked to consider the (Acting) Returning Officer's report, to approve the boundary changes proposed and to note the (Acting) Returning Officer's determinations in relation to Polling Stations.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No.
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer Henshall: 13 August 2019
Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)?	Eamonn Croston: 14 August 2019
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft: 12 August 2019
Cabinet member portfolio	Corporate Cllr Graham Turner

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: All

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR? Yes, there are no GDPR implications arising from the content of the report.

1. **Summary**

The location of proposed polling districts and polling places is the responsibility of the local authority and the location of the polling stations within them is the responsibility of the (Acting) Returning Officer.

Kirklees Council has, historically, designated the whole polling district as the 'polling place'. This approach allows flexibility for the (Acting) Returning Officer to select different buildings within the polling district, enabling last minute changes to polling stations prior to an election if that becomes necessary. Ward councillors are always consulted at the time of any change of a polling station in such circumstances.

In preparing her submission, the (Acting) Returning Officer has considered the accessibility levels of the current polling stations, information received from polling stations as part of their evaluation of facilities at recent elections, comments received from various individuals/groups as part of the recent consultation process and any comments received from electors. The evaluation of all polling stations is an on-going process at all elections.

All relevant Ward Members have been consulted on any proposed changes.

Only minor amendments have been proposed by the (Acting) Returning Officer to existing polling districts with no new polling districts being created.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

The paper attached to the report at Appendix 1 details the (Acting) Returning Officer's final proposals to council in respect of the above review, as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2013 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

It is the Council that determines the polling district boundaries within wards. Legislation requires that the (Acting) Returning Officer submits recommendations in relation to boundary changes for approval by the Council. The Council has delegated decision making on boundary changes to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

Decisions are required on the proposed boundary changes affecting:

- CL08/CL02
- DE02/DE03
- MF04/MF05
- AB01

The (Acting) Returning Officer has personal responsibility for determination of the location of polling stations within those boundaries.

A list of existing polling stations is also attached for information at Appendix 2. Those polling stations affected by this review are highlighted.

3. **Implications for the Council**

There are no specific implications for the council other than the requirement to provide the most suitable polling districts to enable the (Acting) Returning Officer to provide polling stations which are as convenient and accessible as possible to electors.

Financial implications: the proposed changes to boundaries are cost neutral.

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

All Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, Constituency political parties and local disability groups have been consulted. Their responses are included in the attached report. The consultation was also promoted through 'Involve' section of the council's website where members of the public were asked for their views.

Responses received are attached to this report.

5. **Next steps and timelines**

If the report is approved, the Electoral Registration Officer will make appropriate amendments to the Register of Electors in relation to the alteration of polling district boundaries referred to in the (Acting) Returning Officer's submission and these will take effect on publication of the next annual electoral register.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

The (Acting) Returning Officer and Electoral Services Manager recommend that the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee approve the proposals in the report attached at Appendix 1 in relation to polling district boundaries and note the (Acting) Returning Officer's determinations in relation to the changes to location of polling stations, for the reasons detailed in the report.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

8. **Contact officer**

Sharon Salvanos, Electoral Services Manager, 74490, sharon.salvanos@kirklees.gov.uk

Martin Haigh, Assistant Electoral Services Manager, 74491, martin.haigh@kirklees.gov.uk

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Background papers attached:

- Polling District and Polling Station Review 2019 – (Acting) Returning Officer's submission (Appendix 1)
- List of polling stations detailed where polling station will change and accessibility levels (Appendix 2)

10. **Service Director responsible:**

Rachel Spencer Henshall

POLLING DISTRICT & POLLING STATION REVIEW 2019**(ACTING) RETURNING OFFICER'S SUBMISSION****AUGUST 2019**

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 required that a Polling District and Polling Station Review must take place in the period of 16 months from 1 October 2013. Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year thereafter.

The (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) has ensured that the scheduling of this review is timed so that any relevant changes to polling districts can be made by the Electoral Registration Officer to the Register of Electors at the next publication of the annual register.

It should be noted that it is the Council that determines the polling district boundaries within wards. Legislation requires that the (Acting) Returning Officer submits recommendations in relation to boundary changes for approval by the Council. The Council has delegated decision making on boundary changes to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

The (Acting) Returning Officer has personal responsibility for determination of the location of polling stations within those boundaries.

Note:

- Where electorate figures are provided below, these figures relate to voters in person (VIP) as at 1 August 2019;
- For the purpose of taking the poll in England and Wales, the (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use free of charge schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament. This includes academies and free schools;
- Schools/academies which need to close as a result of being used as polling stations can move to alternative accommodation or make up the lost day by other means. The lost day can be made up at the beginning or end of a term, or a training day can be arranged on the day of the poll if the head teacher or governors so wish. The relevant legislation can be found in: The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22.
- Schools/academies used as polling stations are informed more than one year in advance of scheduled elections and are encouraged to allocate one of their training days on the day of the poll should they choose to close.

Birstall and Birkenshaw Ward**BB03 (VIP electorate: 1096)**

The continued availability of Howden Clough Tenants' Association for use as a polling station is uncertain. Two other possible venues have been suggested as potential buildings

to use as a polling station, Howden Clough Community Centre or the Methodist Church on Nab Lane.

Howden Clough Community Centre has been visited and has been found to be suitable. There is ample parking and the hall is a good sized room. The building is, however, sited further away from the residential area than the existing polling station. The Methodist church is on a slope with limited car parking and is also further away from the residential area.

Currently there is no information to suggest that the existing polling station will not be available in the immediate future. KNH has committed to work with the ARO to ensure that we will be notified well in advance if the polling station will no longer be available for use.

The ARO has determined that Howden Clough Tenants' Association will continue to be used as the polling station until such a time when it is no longer available.

BB07 (VIP electorate: 1693)

A concern has been received regarding the continued use of BBG Academy as a polling station. The polling district has been investigated and the lack of any other suitable building within the district has been previously acknowledged by ward councillors. Suggestion as an alternative is to use a temporary unit, to be sited in the car park. For scheduled elections the LRC room is currently used as the polling station, this has a separate entrance and can be isolated from the main Academy, meaning that the Academy can remain open.

A temporary unit was used at the most recent unscheduled European Parliamentary election, due to extensive building works being undertaken at the Academy at the time. The cost of siting a temporary unit makes this the least favourable option, together with the fact that temporary units are not easily accessible to disabled voters and provide limited room, particularly for polling stations with high numbers of electors. The use of temporary units is discouraged when it is possible to find an alternative.

The ARO has determined that the LRC room (BBG Academy) will continue to be used as the polling station.

Cleckheaton Ward

CL08/CL02

A historical request has been received (and noted for inclusion in this review) to move four properties from the CL08 polling district to the CL02 polling district. Access to these properties is via Vine Avenue/Street and it would seem sensible that these properties be in the CL02 polling district. A previous polling station review in 2007 moved a number of neighbouring properties to CL02, it would appear these properties were not included at that time.

The properties affected are:

1-4 Coachhouse Paddocks, Vine Avenue/Vine Street, Cleckheaton BD19 3AU

The ARO proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary so that the four properties above are located in CL02.

Golcar Ward

GC01 (VIP electorate: 1754)

Representatives of Golcar Providence Methodist Church (GPMC) have offered the building to be used as a polling station.

The current polling station is Golcar Scout Centre. The access and equality questionnaire for the recent elections confirmed that Golcar Scout Centre is assessed as a good polling station with level access, has a disabled entrance and offers adequate parking area.

GPMC is not as centrally located within the polling district as the existing polling station. The building is set back from the road side, the main entrance at the front of the building has 5 steps and disabled access is at the rear of the building. Additional signage would be essential, given the distance from the road side. There are potentially two rooms that could be used as a polling station the main hall and a meeting room, both of an adequate size for use as a polling station.

- If the polling station was located in the meeting room at the rear of the building, all access to the polling station would be via the rear entrance (level access).
- Use of the main hall may cause problems for electors with disabilities, mobility problems and those requiring level access, as the rear access door would have to be locked and electors would need to ring to gain access.

The ARO has determined that Golcar Scout Centre will continue to be used as the polling station.

Holme Valley South Ward

HS10 (VIP electorate: 1638)

A request has been received from Upperthong School (the school currently closes on the day of the Poll) to find an alternative venue to use as a polling station. Suggestions as suitable alternatives are St John's Church and Lane Pre-School Playgroup.

St John's Church has previously been investigated and is located on a steep road with no parking.

A site visit has been undertaken at Lane pre-School Playgroup and it was assessed as a suitable alternative (in relation to size and access). However, no chairs or tables are available on-site so these would have to be provided (at a cost) by Building Services. The fees requested (for use of the venue) by the pre-school playgroup mean that the cost of use of this building would be considerable and use would also result in closure of the pre-school playgroup.

The ARO has determined that Upperthong School will continue to be used as the polling station.

Dewsbury East Ward

DE02 & DE03

The current polling district VIP electorate totals for these polling districts are:

DE02: 1571

DE03: 1402

A number of proposals have been submitted regarding the boundaries between DE02 and DE03.

Proposal 1: to amend the polling district boundaries for the DE02 and DE03 polling districts transferring residents south of Shaw Cross junction into DE03, using the centre of Leeds Road as the boundary.

Proposal 2: to completely redraw the boundaries for DE02 and DE03 and create three polling districts. This option would be more costly than the boundaries currently in place.

A response received in response to proposal 2, proposes maintaining the existing arrangements due to cost implications of creating an additional polling district. This response highlighted the housing development at Amberwood Chase, which will significantly increase the number of properties/electors in the polling district. It is therefore suggested that the situation be reviewed in future, following development of the planned housing.

The large housing development at Amberwood Chase is currently under construction, (202 properties are currently listed on the electoral register, the majority of which are still under construction). It may be prudent to wait until the next formal review before making large scale changes to these polling district boundaries.

An alternative option for consideration would be to move the boundary to include the properties referred to in proposal 1 and properties located on the south side of Leeds Road, above the industrial estate to DE03 (*a list can be found on page 9 of this document*). In total this would affect around 500 electors, with no increase of cost and the increase of electorate would not impact on the existing polling station (staffing levels etc.). This change would provide additional future capacity to DE02 polling district when all houses are built/occupied at the Amberwood Chase development, without the creation of an additional polling district.

The ARO proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary so that all properties as detailed in the alternative proposal are moved to DE03.

Dewsbury West Ward

DW04 (VIP electorate: 1506)

A request has been received from Ethos College to find an alternative building for use as a polling station. Investigations have found that there are no suitable alternatives in the polling district. The only option would be to move out of the polling district to create a double polling station in the adjoining polling district at DW03. DW03 (**VIP: 1417**) is located at Westmoor Community Sports Hall, (Westmoor Junior School). The school currently remains open on the day of the poll.

At present parking at Westmoor Community Sports Hall (DW03) can be a problem throughout the day, until the school closes and staff have left. The sports hall has its own car park and the school staff currently use part of this car park. Creation of a double station will increase footfall and vehicles, which may present additional safeguarding issues for the school to consider, resulting in the school needing to close.

The ARO has determined that Ethos College will continue to be used as the polling station.

Kirkburton Ward

KB05 (VIP electorate: 1569)

A request has been received to change the location of the polling station for this polling district from The Hub, Former Salvation Army Building, Riley Lane to Kirkburton Library, Turnshaws Road.

The existing polling station provides good facilities, however, parking is extremely limited, as documented by the Presiding Officer and Polling Station Inspector at previous elections.

The library does not open to the public on Thursdays, the building provides suitable alternative accommodation with designated off road parking available (including designated disabled parking) and is centrally located in the polling station.

The ARO has determined that the polling station for this polling district will be changed to Kirkburton Library.

Mirfield Ward

MF01 (VIP electorate: 2791, double station)

A request has been received to change the location of the polling station for this polling district from Church of Christ the King, Stocksbank Road to Battyeford J&I School, the rationale provided is that Battyeford J & I school is more centrally located within the polling district and has off road parking.

The polling station was changed in 2018 from Battyeford J & I school to the church. The school was concerned about the closure, the use of the school had caused some complaints/concerns over the years from polling station staff, electors and political representatives in previous elections, ward councillors were consulted and all were supportive of the move to the church.

Whilst the church is not centrally located in the polling district, it has roadside parking, provides disabled access and modern facilities and the move has enabled the school to stay open.

Battyeford J & I school had to be used at the recent unscheduled European Parliamentary election, as the church was unavailable due to existing commitments, which could not be cancelled or rearranged. The school was reluctant to accommodate the polling station at the European Parliamentary elections on 23 May 2019, as it resulted in the school closing.

The ARO has determined that the Church of Christ the King will continue to be used as the polling station.

MF01/MF03

A proposal to change the boundary between MF01 and MF03 to follow a footpath from the A644/Huddersfield Road to Nettleton Road.

With regard to Polling District and Polling Station Reviews no alterations can be made to polling districts that would affect Parish/Town Council ward boundaries. Altering MF01 (Battyeford Ward) and MF03 (Eastthorpe Ward) would therefore not be possible.

The ARO is not able to propose this amendment as part of this review.

MF04/MF05

A proposal to change the boundary between the MF04 and MF05 polling districts to allow properties currently in MF04 with vehicular access from Liley Lane, to be moved to MF05 to improve their access to a polling station which is closer/more accessible to the properties.

Both polling districts are part of the Hopton Ward of Mirfield Town Council. Therefore a boundary alteration is possible.

There are four properties which this proposal affects (Dransfield Hill Cottage, Liley Hall, Liley Hall Farm and Little Benroyd). To be able to facilitate this change requires a strip of land to be moved from MF04 to MF05. There are no planning considerations (the area in question is greenbelt) and there are no plans to build.

The ARO proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary so that the three properties above are located in MF05.

Ashbrow Ward

AB01 (electorate VIP: 2372)

A proposal has been received to create an additional polling district, by splitting the AB01 polling district into two. The rationale supporting this proposal relates to a future increase of housing in the area and the distance the electors residing in the north of the polling district have to travel to the existing polling station (Chestnut Centre, Chestnut Street, Deighton).

The number of polling districts were reduced in 2004 during the full ward boundary review, due to the demolition of a large amount of housing.

The formation of a new polling district AB07 would increase staffing and polling accommodation costs. However, considering the planned increased housing and number of refurbished council houses there may be some merit regarding this change.

Projected housing growth from the local plan suggests potential increase from planning permissions and local plan allocations. The polling district boundary could follow Bradley Boulevard as a natural boundary between the two polling districts. This would create two separate polling districts.

The north side of Bradley Boulevard would become AB07 with Northfield Hall as the suggested polling station. Attempts are currently being made to contact Northfield Hall to check whether its use as a polling station would be a viable option.

Electors residing in the south side of Bradley Boulevard would go to the existing polling station at the Chestnut Centre. Staffing levels at this station would be reduced.

The ARO's recommendation is to make no alteration to the boundary at this time, however, this proposal will be revisited at the next review when the planned housing is built.

Almondbury Ward

AL08 (VIP electorate: 686)

Currently the AL08 polling station is a portacabin on the junction of Lascelles Hall Road and Highfield Lane. The temporary unit is accessed by a number of temporary steps and sited on uneven ground. The land is owned by Kirklees Council.

Previous attempts to find an alternative polling station within the polling district have been unsuccessful. A more recent visit to the polling district has again failed to find any other building or land on which a portacabin could be located.

There is an option to move out of the polling district using the St John the Baptist Parish Centre located in the Dalton Ward (DA06). St John's is some distance from the residential area. A move could cause some confusion to local residents living near to the Baptist Centre, as the polling station for these residents is Kirkheaton United Church (currently a double station, VIP 2495).

The ARO has determined that a portacabin on the existing site will continue to be used as a polling station. However, the ARO has requested that investigations are progressed to investigate options for levelling the ground to improve placement of the unit.

Dalton Ward

DA08 (VIP electorate: 1452)

A request has been received to find alternative venue for use as a polling district, a portacabin has been suggested as an alternative. The existing polling station is Rawthorpe Junior School and the school closes on the day of the poll.

There are no suitable alternative buildings within the polling district.

The cost of siting a temporary unit makes this the least favourable option, together with the fact that temporary units are not easily accessible to disabled voters and provide limited room particularly for polling stations with high numbers of electors. The use of temporary units is discouraged when it is possible to find an alternative.

The ARO has determined that Rawthorpe Junior School will continue to be used as the polling station.

Dewsbury East Ward

DE02 & DE03

Street Listing

Alderney Road

Croftlands

Glenlow Road

Guernsey Road

High Street (Property Numbers: 191-215 / 164-184)

Jersey Close

Leeds Road (Property Numbers: 473-555 / 402-672)

Malin Road

Marco Road

Rathlin Road

Sycamore Close

Welwyn Road