



Name of meeting: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: Friday 30 September 2022

Title of report: Interim Polling District Review

Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to seek approval to amend the polling district boundaries following the conclusion of an interim polling district review.

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 <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u>?	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Rachael Spencer-Henshall – approval received Friday 2 September 2022 Eamonn Croston – approval received Thursday 15 September 2022 Julie Muscroft – approval received Friday 2 September 2022
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Paul Davies

Electoral wards affected: Dewsbury East & Liversedge and Gomersal

Ward councillors consulted: Yes

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? The report does not contain any personal data.

1. Summary

In accordance with section 18c (subsection 1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, Kirklees Council has conducted a review of the following polling districts:

DE02, DE03 and DE04 located in the Dewsbury East Ward
LG05 and LG06 located in the Liversedge and Gomersal Ward

The current and proposed polling district boundaries are set out on the maps provided at appendix 3.

The review has been conducted to address immediate polling station issues relating to the development of new housing estates in Dewsbury East and the lack of unsuitable buildings within the current polling district boundaries in Liversedge and Gomersal. The review seeks to improve accessibility to polling stations for electors within the defined areas.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Background

The last review of Parliamentary polling districts and places for the Kirklees area took place in May 2019. Statutory Parliamentary polling district and places reviews take place on a 5-year cycle with the next full review due to commence between October 2023 with a statutory deadline for completion of January 2025.

The Representation of the People Act 1983 permits local authorities to conduct an interim review to address any significant issues outside of the statutory review timeline. The Council is required to determine the polling district boundaries within the ward boundaries. The Council has delegated decision making on boundary changes to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

Electorate figures are provided below, these figures relate to voters in person (VIP) as at 1 August 2022 in each polling district that has been reviewed:

Polling District	Electorate (VIP)
DE02	1333
DE03	2084
DE04	1823
LG05	1088
LG06	1407

When conducting an interim review, local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:

- Each parish in England and community in Wales is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply.
- The council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors.
- The polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district).
- The polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

The statutory notice commencing the review was published on Friday 22 July 2022 and outlined the proposals for both wards. The notice of the review was published on relevant notice boards, the council website and shared directly with all elected members for each ward affected as well as each Member of Parliament for Dewsbury and Batley and Spen constituencies.

The public and elected officials were invited to make representations on the initial proposals for a five-week period. As per the guidance for delivering reviews, all representations made to the (Acting Returning Officer) must then be published. You can view all representations made at Appendix 1.

The (Acting) Returning Officer must also make a representation and address the representations received in her response. You can view the (Acting) Returning Officers submission at Appendix 2. A summary of the (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals can be viewed at 2.4.

Following the close of the consultation period and the publication of the representations received, the (Acting) Returning Officer must then present the final proposals to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for approval before any changes are made. If approved, the changes to the polling districts as proposed will be implemented on the publication of the full electoral register on the 1 December 2022.

2.2 Dewsbury East Proposed Polling District Changes

Dewsbury East Ward – Polling Districts DE03 & DE04

This review was conducted to address the Persimmon Homes housing development off Rumble Road currently located in polling district DE02 and the Lord Savile Trust/Vistry Homes housing development that once completed, will be located in a small section of both polling districts of DE02 and DE03.

Polling District DE04 amendment proposal:

The majority of properties within the DE02 polling district are located above the Shaw Cross Business Park and therefore, the polling station location for all properties within DE02 is:

Shaw Cross Community Centre

**122 Smallwood Road
Shaw Cross
Dewsbury
WF12 7RR**

The Persimmon housing development located off Rumble Road has led to the new properties being situated just outside the current polling district boundary of DE04 at the edge of Shaw Cross Business Park. Therefore, the electors registered at this new development are required to travel a greater distance to Shaw Cross Community Centre to cast their vote. There are currently 113 electors registered that are affected by this.

The proposal is to move the polling district boundary of DE04 so that this estate be included within the polling district of DE04. This will allow the electors within the new estate to cast their vote at the polling station situated at The Large Conference Room, Manor Croft Academy, Old Bank Road Entrance, Dewsbury WF12 7DW which is a shorter distance from the estate and will be much more easily accessible by foot.

The streets affected are as follows:

- Hawk Road
- Kingfisher Way
- Rumble Road
- Woodpecker Road

Polling District DE03 amendment proposal:

Full planning permission was recently granted for a development of 55 homes located off High Street/Challenge Way, Hanging Heaton. This development would be bisected by the current DE02/DE03 polling district boundary.

Once completed, half of the new estate would be located in DE02 and the other half in DE03. This would mean that houses located on this estate that were sectioned by the current polling district boundary line into DE03 would have to travel across Leeds Road and Challenge Way to vote at Shaw Cross Community Centre, 122 Smallwood Road, Shaw Cross, Dewsbury WF12 7RR.

The proposal is to move the polling district boundary of DE03 so that the entire new estate, once completed is located in DE03. Any electors that then register to vote at the new estate would be able to cast their vote at St Paul's Church Hall, Kirkgate, Hanging Heaton WF17 6DJ.

The maps detailing the proposed changes can be found at Appendix 3.

2.3 Liversedge & Gomersal ward proposals

Liversedge and Gomersal – Polling Districts LG05 & LG06

This review is in relation to polling station access for electors located within the LG05 polling district.

Due to the unavailability of suitable buildings within the current LG05 polling district, the polling station location for voters is currently located within the LG06 polling district at the following location:

Spring Valley Community Centre
Spring Valley Close
Littletown
WF15 6QH

Spring Valley Community Centre is located within close proximity to the polling station within LG06 with Bradford Road currently separating the two locations. Therefore, a number of properties within LG06 currently have to pass Spring Valley Community Centre and cross Bradford Road to vote at the following location:

St Andrews Methodist Church
Bradford Road
Liversedge
WF15 6EF

The proposal is to move the polling district boundary line of LG05 that currently runs along Listing Lane to Bradford Road. This would mean that Spring Valley Community Centre is now located within the LG05 polling district. Approximately 356 electors would be moved from LG06 to LG05.

The streets affected are as follows:

- Listerdale
- Well Street
- Spring Valley Square
- Spring Valley Street
- Reuben Street
- Edward Street
- Garden Walk
- Garden Parade
- Garden View
- Garden Avenue
- Garden Close
- Eddercliffe Crescent
- Park House
- Royds Park

2.4 Summary of (Acting) Returning Officers proposals following the consultation period

Dewsbury East Ward – Polling Districts DE03 & DE04

The proposed changes to move the polling district boundary of DE04 so that this estate be included within the polling district of DE04 will allow for better access for the electorate in this area as it is easily accessible on foot and avoids the busy Leeds Road.

A site visit to the polling station at DE04 has concluded that the polling station is a large enough space to host the additional number of voters in person (approximately 113 at present).

All ward members representing Dewsbury East are supportive of this proposal.

The (Acting) Returning Officer therefore proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary so that all properties located within this development are moved to DE04.

Regarding the Vistry Homes development, all three Councillors representing the Dewsbury East ward submitted comments to the (Acting) Returning Officer. The full representations made can be viewed at Appendix 1.

A site visit has taken place to both polling districts to further understand the comments made in relation to the proposal. The (Acting) Returning Officer has considered all comments made and recognises that whilst St Pauls Church does currently have a larger electorate voting in person than Shaw Cross, the premise is much bigger than Shaw Cross Community Centre and could suitably host the additional electorate once the Vistry Homes development is completed.

In addition to this, as electors travelling to the polling station on foot would have to cross two main roads, Challenge Way and Leeds Road, to reach Shaw Cross Community Centre, St Pauls Church Hall is easier to access by foot. There is no underpass under the road for electors on foot to avoid the busy main roads.

Where possible, polling districts should consist of well-defined boundaries. Geographically, the Vistry development directly adjoins neighbouring homes on High Street within the DE03 polling district and will be considered as part of that neighbourhood surrounding St Paul's Church rather than housing estate located in the Chidswell area on the opposite side of the polling district. The main road would provide a well-defined boundary to the polling district and neighbourhood.

The (Acting) Returning Officer proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary of DE03 so that once completed, the Vistry homes development will be included within the DE03 polling district only.

Liversedge and Gomersal – Polling Districts LG05 & LG06

Currently, due to the unavailability of suitable buildings within the current LG05 polling district, the polling station location for voters is currently located within the LG06 polling district. The proposal to move the boundary line from Listing Lane to Bradford Road would create a polling station within the LG05 polling district and allow for easier access to the location rather than electors crossing the main road.

All three ward members representing the Liversedge and Gomersal ward are supportive of this proposal.

The (Acting) Returning Officer proposes that the alteration be made to the polling district boundary of LG05 to allow the polling station location to be located within the LG05 polling district.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Not applicable

3.2 Working with Partners

Not applicable

3.3 Place Based Working

Not applicable

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not applicable

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

Not applicable

3.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

Not applicable

3.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

All elected ward members were consulted regarding the proposals. As previously outlined in this report, the representations made during the consultation period can be found at appendix 1. The consultation was a public consultation however the (Acting) Returning Officer received no representation from members of the public.

4. Next steps and timelines

Should the proposals be approved by the Committee, the Electoral Services Manager will amend the polling district boundaries and publish the amended register of electors on the 1 December 2022. It is important to note that should any election take place prior to December 2022, the current polling district boundaries will be in force for that election.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

The Electoral Services Manager recommends that the polling district boundaries are amended as per the (Acting) Returning Officer's proposals which are summarised in section 2.4 and provided at appendix 2 of this report, to ensure better access to polling stations prior to the next scheduled election.

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

7. Contact officer

Name: Laura Burrell – Electoral Services Manager
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8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

N/A

9. Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning