

Interim Review of Polling Districts – Kirklees Council

(Acting) Returning Officer Submission

August 2022

In accordance with Section 18c (sub section 1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, Kirklees Council is conducting 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 Council determines the polling district boundaries within wards. The Council has delegated decision making on boundary changes to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

Note: Where electorate figures are provided below, these figures relate to voters in person (VIP) as at 1 August 2022:

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

The closing date for submissions and comments in connection with the interim review of polling districts was Tuesday 30 August. A number of comments were put forward for consideration and the (Acting) Returning Officer has made a number of recommendations and proposals resulting from these responses.

Dewsbury East Polling District Review – DE02, DE03 & DE04:

The (Acting) Returning Officer received comments from all three ward members relating to the proposed changes.

In regard to the Persimmon Housing Development off Rumble Road, the property development is now complete and there are registered electors at the new development. 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).

The ARO 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 Lord Savile Trust/Vistry Homes recently permitted housing development, once completed to be located in a small section of both polling districts DE02 and DE03, the ARO has received comments from all three ward members for Dewsbury East. Councillor Eric Firth and Councillor Cathy Scott have requested that the entire new development once completed, be included within the DE02 polling district which would allow residents to cast their vote at Shaw Cross Community Centre, 122 Smallwood Road, Shaw Cross, Dewsbury WF12 7RR as the entrance to the new development will be located on Grange Road. The Grange Road entrance to the new estate is approximately 0.3 miles from the polling station at Shaw Cross. Councillor Firth has also highlighted that St Pauls Church is a busy polling station with a large electorate.

Councillor Aleks Lukic has highlighted that the new development will include a footpath that will connect to the existing public footpath at the corner of the site next to 165 High Street and therefore there will be easy access on foot to St Paul's Church Hall. Councillor Lukic has also highlighted that if the development is placed in polling district DE02 it would be separated from the rest of the polling district by two main roads, Challenge Way and Leeds Road. Councillor Lukic has stated that this would pose a significant barrier because the only way to access the polling station on foot would be to cross both main roads at or near Shaw Cross junction, using the traffic signals.

Councillor Lukic has also expressed concerns about preserving the capacity at the DE02 polling station because the Shaw Cross Community Centre is a very small room normally used for Tenants and Resident Association meetings. Within DE02 there are already 260 more homes under construction at the Barratt housing site on Owl Lane and these may be joined by further proposed developments at Chidswell which would also be within DE02.

Councillor Lukic has also highlighted that in terms of community ties, the Vistry development directly adjoins neighbouring homes on High Street within the DE03 polling district and can be considered as part of that neighbourhood surrounding St Paul's Church. Councillor Lukic feels that if the development was to be located in DE02 the development would be significantly separated/isolated from its nearest residential neighbours by the main roads and non-residential development in between.

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. Additionally, 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. The main road would provide a well-defined boundary to the polling district and neighbourhood.

The ARO 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 District Review – LG05 and LG06

The (Acting) Returning Officer received comments from all three ward members representing Liversedge and Gomersal ward supporting the proposal to alter the polling district boundary line of LG05 that currently runs along Listing Lane to Bradford Road.

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.

The ARO 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.