

Report title: Interim Polling District and Places Review 2025

Meeting	Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
Date	Friday 26 September 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Councillor Nosheen Dad
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No No
Purpose of Report To seek approval to amend the polling district boundaries following the statutory public consultation process.	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee are asked to agree that the polling district boundaries are amended as proposed by the Returning Officer, as detailed at Appendix 1 to ensure that the Council has a polling scheme in place to facilitate the elections in May 2026 to the new ward boundaries as amended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The committee are asked to note the polling scheme as detailed at Appendix 2 and the polling district boundaries detailed on the maps at Appendix 3. Reasons for Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New district ward boundaries for Kirklees have been agreed by Parliament and are due to take effect at the elections in May 2026. Due to the new boundaries, some of the current polling district and polling station arrangements are no longer viable. Where polling district boundaries have been recommended for amendments, the reasons for change include, relieving pressure from polling stations that are operating above the Electoral Commissions recommended capacity (2250 voters in person), the whole or part polling district may have been moved to another ward as part of the Commissions review and to address disparities with the number of polling districts across the wards with a view to achieve a more equitable balance of polling districts where practicable. Several anomalies have been created by the LGBCE where areas have been moved between wards that are different Parliamentary Constituencies or Parish/Town Council areas. To successfully deliver the election, polling districts need to be created or amended for administrative reasons to allow polling stations to operate correctly. Where it has been possible to do so, several recommendations have been made to amend the polling district boundaries to facilitate new polling stations to avoid using schools/childcare facilities, as the use of these buildings leads to disruption or closure on polling day. 	
Resource Implication: The reduction of polling districts operating with larger polling stations within the Electoral Commissions recommended limit will reduce the cost of delivering elections as fewer venues and equipment will be required.	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 09 September 2025 Kevin Mulvaney – 09 September 2025

Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?

Samantha Lawton – 10 September 2025

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Yes

Public or private: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Appendix 1 and 2 outlines recommended polling district boundary amendments following consultation with the public and elected members.
- 1.2 The Committee is asked to consider the Returning Officer's response to the representations received during the consultation and approve the recommendations for the new polling scheme as detailed at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee has delegated authority to approve polling district boundaries whilst the decision on the location of polling stations is determined by the Returning Officer. The report details polling station changes determined by the Returning Officer as a result of the LGBCE's review for transparency.
- 1.4 Neither the ward boundaries, nor the parliamentary constituency boundaries, can be changed as part of the council's review of polling districts and polling places, as they are the responsibility of the relevant Boundary Commission. The Parish/Town Council boundaries cannot be amended as part of this review.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.2 Background

In accordance with section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has conducted a polling district and places review to address creating a suitable polling scheme to facilitate the new warding arrangements.

When conducting a 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 polling 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 areas of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

The review formally commenced on the 25 March, the initial proposals were published and residents, elected members, local groups and stakeholders were invited to comment on the initial proposals.

Following the close of the consultation period at the end of April and the publication of the representations received, the Returning Officer must then present the final proposals to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for approval before any changes are made to the polling district boundaries. If approved, the changes as proposed will be implemented on the publication of the full electoral register on the 1 December 2025.

2.3 Timescale

Should the proposed changes be approved by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, the electoral register will be amended to reflect the new polling scheme, and the revised register of electors will be published on the 1 December 2025.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

Having an effective polling scheme in place for new ward boundaries ensures access to elections and is a key facilitator for implementing the new warding arrangements at the next election.

Implementing the new polling scheme on the 1 December will give adequate time to inform residents of their new warding arrangements and polling station locations. This will support the principal of getting the basics right to ensure residents are directly informed ahead of the all-out district council elections in May 2026.

3.2 Financial Implications

Due to the co-location and reduction of polling stations, should the polling district boundaries be approved as recommended, the total number of venues to hire will be reduced by 16 locations and the total number of polling stations will reduce by 7. It costs approximately £1500 - £2000 to open a polling station due to staffing costs, venue hire and equipment costs being variable at the size of the station. Therefore, we are expecting to see a saving of approximately £10,500.

3.3 Legal Implications

The review has been conducted in line with section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Kirklees (Electoral Changes) Order 2025 determines the external ward boundaries and the names of all district wards for the Borough of Kirklees.

As part of the review process, the proposals were subject to formal statutory consultation and the responses have been considered and responded to by the Returning Officer. Both members of the Council and members of the public were invited to respond to the consultation.

The new district ward boundaries have been fixed by Parliament and these cannot be changed by Kirklees Council, but it is necessary to consider polling station boundaries in light of the ward boundary changes.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

No implications.

3.5 Other (e.g. Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

No implications.

4 Consultation

All elected ward members were consulted regarding the initial proposals published in March and were invited directly to participate in the formal consultation period and share the initial proposals with local groups and on their social media platforms. All comments received from Members were referred to the Returning Officer for consideration ahead of the publication of the final polling scheme at Appendix 2. The Returning Officers response to each representation received is included at Appendix 1.

The public consultation process led to several responses received from members of the public, school representatives, elected members, political groups and some booking agents for polling station premises.

All elected Members of Parliament representing the four constituencies of Kirklees, the Member of Parliament for Ossett and Denby Dale, Mayor of West Yorkshire and Parish/Town Councils were invited to participate in the consultation period. No responses were received.

Local community groups and charities which have previously engaged were invited to participate, however, no responses were received.

Additionally, due to the cross-boundary nature of the future Parliamentary constituency in Ossett and Denby Dale, the (Acting) Returning Officer for Wakefield was invited to comment on the proposals. No response was received from the (Acting) Returning Officer for Ossett and Denby Dale constituency.

5 Engagement

The Returning Officer has been fully engaged throughout the review process as have elected members as it has been important to explore options put forward by members who are uniquely placed to suggest improvements and alternatives that work best for their residents.

6 Options

6.1 Options Considered

Option A: The Councils adopts the polling scheme as detailed at Appendix 2 to allow for a scheme that serves the new warding arrangements. The new polling scheme will then take effect from 1 December 2025.

Option B: Alternative options are suggested for polling district boundaries and the electoral register is delayed publishing on the new boundaries until 1 February 2026 to allow time to review any suggested amendments to the polling scheme.

6.2 **Reasons for recommended Option**

Option A is recommended as this would allow the new polling scheme to be in place for the 1st of December to allow planning for the election to begin and data to be produced for the new wards upon request. An in-depth approach has been taken to this review and consideration has been given to new housing developments and future increases in electorate.

The proposed polling scheme will serve the new wards well and ensure a more equitable balance of polling districts and places.

7 **Next steps and timelines**

Should the proposed scheme be approved, the Electoral Services Manager will create the new register of electors and publish the annual register on the 1 December 2025. All residents that are affected by the changes will be written to, informing them of their new polling station location and ward area. The letters to residents affected by the review will be despatched in October and November informing them of the changes.

8 **Contact officer**

Laura Burrell – Electoral Services Manager laura.burrell@kirklees.gov.uk or telephone 01484 226345.

9 **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, 24/11/2023 10:00](#)

10 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Returning Officers Recommendations and Responses

Appendix 2 – Proposed Polling Scheme

Appendix 3 – Revised Ward Maps

11 **Service Director responsible**

Samantha Lawton – Service Director Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)