

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Interim Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the arrangements for the interim review of polling districts and polling places which will begin on 30 September 2024.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the proposed arrangements for the review of polling districts and polling places.

3. Detail

Local authorities are required to review their polling districts and polling places for UK parliamentary constituencies at least once every five years. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 dictates that a compulsory review of all polling districts and places must take place every five years. The next compulsory review is to commence and complete between 1 October 2028 and 31 January 2030. However, there is provision for an interim review to be carried out where changes are identified as being required or desirable. Two polling places were unavailable for the elections in 2024 and temporary changes were agreed by the Chief Executive using specific delegated powers. An interim review is now required to make these changes permanent. The process to be followed when carrying out a review is set out in the **Appendix**.

The review will be carried out between 30 September 2024 and 28 October 2024. A further report will be submitted to this Committee on 25 November 2024 setting out responses received to the consultation and recommendations for any changes to be considered by Council on 11 December 2024.

If any changes are made to polling district boundaries the Electoral Registration Officer must amend the electoral register accordingly. A revised register will, if necessary, be published on 1 February 2025. The (Acting) Returning Officers for both the Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley Parliamentary Constituencies will also be required to comment on the polling places which would be used if any proposals are accepted. Election rules require the (Acting) Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and must allocate electors to the polling stations as they think most convenient.

While legislation does not provide a role for the Electoral Commission in the review process, following the conclusion of the review, specified interested parties may make representations to the Electoral Commission to reconsider any polling districts and polling places if it is considered that the Council did not meet

the reasonable requirements of electors or take account of accessibility for people with a disability. The Commission may direct the Council to make any alterations to the polling places which it thinks necessary and, if the alterations are not made within two months, may make the alterations themselves.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no additional financial implications to consider at this stage with activity being contained within existing budgets. Any significant budget implications going forward, over and above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a legal duty on the Council to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places within each parliamentary constituency in its area. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews.

Chapter 3 Part 1 of the Scheme of Delegation in the constitution allows the Chief Executive to make necessary changes to polling stations at short notice before an election with any permanent changes being approved at Full Council.

6. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

AppendixReview process

When carrying out the review, local authorities must:

- publish a notice of the holding of a review
- consult the (Acting) Returning Officer for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area
- publish all representations made by an (Acting) Returning Officer within 30 days of receipt by posting a copy of them at the local authority's office and in at least one conspicuous place in their area and, if the authority maintains a website, by placing a copy on the authority's website
- seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (Acting) Returning Officer(s).

On completion of a review, the local authority must give reasons for its decisions and publish:

- all correspondence sent to an (Acting) Returning Officer in connection with the review
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review
- the minutes of any meeting held by the Council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review
- details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review
- details of the places where the results of the review have been published

Notice of the review will be sent to the Acting Returning Officers for the Broxtowe and Nottingham North and Kimberley Parliamentary Constituencies, all Members of Broxtowe Council, County Councillors for electoral divisions within Broxtowe, the MPs for the Broxtowe and Ashfield Parliamentary Constituencies, local political parties and stakeholders representing disabled people in the Borough. It will also be advertised on the Council's website and through social media channels.