

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2023

REVIEW OF PARLIMENTARY POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2023/24

REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER INSIGHT OFFICER

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Every local authority is required to carry out a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations every five years. This is to ensure reasonable facilities are provided for voting and that polling places are accessible to all electors.
- 1.2 The last compulsory review of polling districts and polling places in the South Staffordshire Constituency commenced in October 2022 and was completed in January 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee note the current proposed changes to polling districts and places.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY/COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council Plan objectives?	
	Yes	The delivery of the democratic process underpins the operation of local government and thus the delivery of the Council Plan objectives.
	Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed?	
	N/A	The purpose of the review is to ensure that all voters have reasonable facilities for voting. Assessments for each polling station will be undertaken in accordance with requirements.
SCRUTINY POWERS APPLICABLE	N/A – report to Standards and Resources Committee	
KEY DECISION	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	January 2024	

FINANCIAL IMPACT	Yes	All Polling Stations have a booking fee; there is an establishment budget for the paying of these fees.
LEGAL ISSUES	None	The Council has undertaken the review in accordance with the principles in the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	All	

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 4.1 Since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be. The Boundary Commission for England has completed a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries and published its final recommendations.
- 4.2 As a result of this, it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible so that the Council has agreed polling districts and polling places to be used for the next parliamentary election, which must take place before 28 January 2025, as well as the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections which will be held in May 2024.
- 4.3 There is no change to the boundaries only the names of the Constituency have been changed (Kingswinford and South Staffordshire Constituency and Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge Constituency).
- 4.4 A notice to launch the review was published on the 13 November 2023 and full details of the review are available on the Council's website and notice boards. The review is also being promoted on social media and through news round-ups. Information on the proposed scheme by the (Acting) Returning Officer Dave Heywood is also available on the website during the review.

Consultation and engagement

- 4.5 We will undertake a proportionate consultation with stakeholders and those with an interest in the review, including but not limited to:
- Local government electors/residents of the district
 - Parish and town councils

- Parish meetings
- District councillors
- County councillors
- Members of Parliament
- Residents Associations
- Local public and voluntary organisations
- Local disability groups
- Polling place venues
- Political parties

4.6 Following the combined local elections in May 2023, we reviewed the feedback provided to us from our Polling Station Inspectors, Presiding Officers, Candidates and agents and electors to ensure that the Polling Stations remain suitable for electors.

4.7 There is only one proposed change following local elections and feedback provided. Kingswinford and South Staffordshire constituency, Polling District RAA, Perton East, move from Perton Pavillion and Scout Club, Gainsborough Drive, Perton to 'The Lakeside Hall' - Perton Civic Centre, Church Road. This change is recommended due to feedback of poor accessibility at night and in wet weather. Furthermore, due to the building being unusable at the local election in May the Lakeside Hall was used, and no complaints were received in the change of venue. The Lakeside Hall is easier and safer to access and a more suitable venue for a polling station.

Publishing the conclusions of the review

4.8 Following approval from the Standards and Resources Committee on January 26th, we will publish a notice of conclusion of the review on the Council's website, take any associated actions and provide a link to this report which shows all the correspondence we received as part of the review.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Notice of the review

Appendix B – Acting Returning Officer comments on proposed polling stations

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