

POLLING DISTRICTS, PLACES AND STATIONS REVIEW 2018

Electoral Registration Team



BUSINESS CASE

Document Control

Project Title	Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review 2018	Unique Identifier	BC 2 14/09/18
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Version History

Version	Date	Author	Reference	Pages Affected
1	04/09/2018	Emmanuelle Marshall	V1	N/A
2	14/09/2018	Emmanuelle Marshall	V2	Page 2 2.2 Aims

Reviewers

Name	Position	Date
Glenda Favor-Ankersen	Head of Electoral Services	19/09/2018
Giles Perritt	Assistant Chief Executive	19/09/2018
Cllr Kate Taylor	Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee	24/09/2018

Sign off

Name	Position	Date
Tracey Lee	Chief Executive, ERO	
Kate Taylor	Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee	

1. Executive Summary

This Business Case recommends the implementation of the Polling District, Polling Places and Polling stations Review on 5 November 2018.

Any new polling arrangements are to be agreed by Council by 1 October 2019, in accordance with Plymouth City Council's constitution.

The polling districts, polling places and polling stations finally decided on will be used for the May 2020 local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

2. Strategic Case

2.1 Case for Change

All local authorities must review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The City Council has a statutory duty to keep polling places and polling districts under review and to authorise changes. The last review for Plymouth City Council was conducted in 2013. The next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.

Local Authorities must comply with a number of legislative requirements regarding the location and accessibility of Polling Districts and Polling Places. The mandatory review process comprises a number of specified steps set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983, which include a public consultation.

The review process, from the publication of the notice of the review until the publication of the documents at the end, must take place within the period of 16 months specified by the legislation.

It is the Returning Officer's role to select the polling stations. According to Plymouth City Council's Constitution, it is the Full Council which makes the decisions on any proposed changes to polling districts or polling places.

2.2 Aims

Plymouth City Council's aims are to uphold a high standard of compliance with our statutory duty to keep polling districts, polling places and polling stations under review.

2.3 Scope

Plymouth is divided into 116 Polling Districts each associated with one of 114 Polling Places (currently two of those Polling Places host two Polling Stations).

The review will make recommendations for change or no change for each of those Polling Districts or Polling Places.

Polling District - A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area (constituency or ward).

Polling Place - A polling place is the area in which the Returning Officer selects the polling station. In Plymouth polling places represent the same area as the polling district to allow a greater degree of flexibility in deciding where a polling station should be located.

Polling Station - The polling station is the room or building where the poll takes place.

Not in scope

Ward boundaries are not in scope of this review. The review will not be able to consider comments regarding neighbouring parliamentary constituencies, ward boundaries, local authority boundaries, and the names of local authorities or other electoral areas within or bordering Plymouth City.

2.4 Outcomes

Undertaking the work in the autumn 2018 ensures we have adequate time to do a full and comprehensive review with the added benefit of implementing recommendations in advance of the 2020 elections.

The review is likely to lead to a redrafting of some of the boundaries between districts, the creation or removal of existing districts and changes to the location of some polling stations.

3. Management Considerations

Specific legislation prescribes the process which must be followed when conducting the review. The Electoral Commission has produced a best practice guide outlining this process and the legal requirements placed on the Council.

The review will consider any representations from local residents and stakeholders in the city, including any issues regarding access to premises or facilities for persons with disabilities. Any elector can make their views known and the process for doing so will be publicised. In addition, the review will consider the impact of the next four years' worth of planned residential developments on existing electoral arrangements.

The availability and accessibility of suitable polling places is the key determining factor in the makeup of polling districts. Therefore, in asking for comments, we will request that alternative proposals should include suggestions for polling station locations. In extreme circumstances where there is no local alternative available, the polling station can be placed outside the polling district, but this is not recommended in order to avoid confusion for electors. The type of situation where this might arise is in cases where the only possible location would be a building with unsatisfactory access or where it would otherwise be necessary to install a temporary station.

There is a right for some persons and bodies to appeal against reviews of polling districts and places to the Electoral Commission but only on certain grounds. An appeal can only be made on the grounds that the review was not conducted so as to meet the reasonable requirements of electors in the constituency, or take sufficient account of disabled access to polling stations.

3.1 Risk Analysis

A risk register has been created for this project. The outcomes of the risk analysis is that the project presents a moderate risk of disruption to service provision and a modest risk on the budget.

The main risks associated with the conduct of this project are:

- Short-term disruption to service during the delivery stage,
- Moderate budgetary costs associated with those potential disruptions,
- Some adverse publicity,
- Potential for complaints and appeals to the Electoral Commission.

The risk register identifies mitigating action that will be taken to minimize those risks. This will include regular review of the risks throughout the life of the project.

3.2 Financial Implications

The project is anticipated to bring about moderate specific delivery costs in addition to those incurred in the usual running of the business:

- Creation of a temporary project management role for 9 months at grade E,
- Specific IT training for electoral services officers,
- Mapping services from the planning department.

4. Options Appraisal and Recommendations

4.1 Option 1

Conduct the review in compliance with the legislation.

4.2 Option 2 – Do nothing

This option is unsustainable as it would put Plymouth City Council in a position of non-compliance with the legislation.

4.3 Recommended Option

This Business Case recommends Option 1.