



Review of Polling Districts And Polling Places 2018 Consultation Outcome Report

OUTCOME OF THE POLLING DISTRICTS & POLLING STATION REVIEW 2018

Background

Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to 'carry out and complete' reviews of polling districts and polling places every five years. However, this review has had regard to the outcome of a review of the Council's electoral ward arrangements undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England which has increased the number of wards within the Borough from 22 to 24.

A polling place is provided for electors living within each polling district. The changes to Wards mean that the Council was required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places within the Borough, pursuant to Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

A polling place for a polling district is expected to be an area in that district, except where special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the polling district. Any polling district is expected to be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling place.

The aim of the review is to seek that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances. The Council must seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

The choice of polling place will often be a balance between the quality (access, facilities, etc.) of a building and the distance between the residents and that building compared to other options for polling places.

There is no fixed rule on how to decide how this should be done. Councils should be able to show that they followed a reasonable methodology in arriving at their choice.

The Electoral Commission, while not having direct responsibility for the review, can intervene where it considers that the reasonable requirements of electors or the needs of disabled electors have not been taken into account.

The Commission recommends that there be no more than 2,500 electors per polling station (excluding electors registered for a postal vote).

Consideration was given to any further development in the borough in terms of new build residential properties and demolitions.

The review process

As required, the first stage of the review was giving notice. A Public notice was posted on the Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Website, and consultation letters and information packs were distributed around the Borough, to local Members of Parliament, Redcar & Cleveland Councillors and local disability organisations. A list is given in **Appendix 1**.

Information was provided on the Council's website to inform the public about how to comment on their polling stations and feedback from electors, Polling Station staff and Polling Station Inspectors was also considered from recent elections.

Outcome of the consultation

Consideration has been given to each new Ward, its polling districts and polling places in line with the legislation requirements and taking into account the responses to the consultation.

Electoral Services received 4 responses from Councillors and 2 responses from members of the public see **Appendix 2**.

A complete list of proposed Polling Districts and Polling Stations is attached at **Appendix 3**.

One station, Oakley Walk Community Centre (St John's Ambulance day centre), has been designated in the Eston ward as a result of comments made during the consultation by a Councillor and a member of the public.

In the Hutton ward, a comment was received suggesting the use of an alternative polling place for some residents. The suggested venue is situated in a different ward and is therefore not appropriate to be used for Hutton ward residents. Should an elector feel that their designated polling station is too far to travel to, they will be able to apply to obtain a postal vote to ensure that they are able to vote if they wish to.

Comments were received regarding the use of alternative venues in the South Bank ward. The proposed venues are situated in a different ward and are therefore not suitable for use for South Bank ward residents. Contact was made with a commercial premises in the area to see if it could be considered

as an alternative venue to Inspire 2 Learn, however the owner declined the request for the venue to be used as a polling station.

A final comment was received querying whether Ryehills School would be open to pupils on polling day. Arrangements have been made with the school to put measures in place to segregate pupils and electors, so that the school can remain open on polling days.

Final Outcome

The initial proposals of this review were influenced by the Local Government Boundary Commission ward boundary review. The increase in the number of wards from 22 to 24 has meant that there has been a significant amount of changes to polling districts but not necessarily the number polling stations used. The voter numbers for each district, location of stations and access to enable voters the best possible experience were also a prime consideration. As a result of the significant boundary changes, where possible (and where no issues have been identified) it has been suggested that the council retain the existing polling stations that are familiar to local residents, aiding voter awareness and turnout.

The total across the borough will be 87 polling districts, 71 polling places and 82 polling stations.