

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2014**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To consider the outcome of the recent review of polling districts and polling places and to agree a number of changes.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006, require each local authority to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places on a regular 4 yearly cycle. The last review was completed in 2011. It was decided to commence the review in good time so that any changes (particularly changes to polling district boundaries) could be implemented in time for the publication of the Register of Electors 2014/15 on 1 December, 2014. The review commenced on 22 September 2014 and the consultation period ended on 17 October 2014.

2.02 In undertaking a review the local authority must:

- a) Publish notice of the holding of a review;
- b) Consult the Returning Officer for every Parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area;
- c) Enable any such Returning Officer to make representations to the authority and publish them in a prescribed manner;
- d) Seek representations from such persons that it thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
- e) Allow any elector in the authority's area to make representations which could include proposals for alternative polling places.

2.03 On completion of a review the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as is prescribed in the Act and Regulations.

POLLING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND POLLING PLACES – LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.04 Polling districts are, in effect, sub divisions of Electoral wards. When designating polling districts the local authority must seek to ensure that all the electors in the area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances. Responsibility for determining polling district boundaries lie with the Council itself.
- 2.05 The Council must designate a polling place for every polling district unless the size or other circumstances of the polling district are such that the situation of the polling place does not materially affect the convenience of the electorate. In determining where polling places should be located the Council must seek to ensure that all the electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances and that, so far as is reasonable and practical, polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled. The polling place for a polling district must normally be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate a location either wholly or partially outside the polling district. The Council is responsible for designating polling places whereas authority for determining where the polling station should be within the polling place has been delegated to the Returning Officer. Typically a school might be designated as the polling place, leaving the discretion to the Returning Officer to decide, in consultation with the school, the exact location of the polling station within the school premises.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

RESPONSES RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.01 Responses were received from the following indicating that they are happy with the polling districts and polling places in their area and these are as follows:

Members for Argoed, Bagillt West, Cilcain, Gwernymynydd, Holywell West, Leeswood, New Brighton, Mold East and Mold South.

Town/Community Councils of Bagillt, Broughton & Bretton, Buckley, Caerwys, Connah's Quay, Flint, Halkyn, Hawarden, Nannerch, Northop, Queensferry and Shotton.

Members of Parliament for the Alyn & Deeside and Delyn Constituencies.

ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.02 Various responses were received and these are summarised in the schedule set out in appendix 1. The schedule provides details of the

electoral division, the polling district, each polling place, sets out specific comments received and identifies any action, if any proposed.

- 3.03 There were no responses received from those listed in 11c) below.
- 3.04 The Returning Officer Comments for the Constituencies of Alyn & Deeside and Delyn were published on Monday 20 October and can be found in appendix 2.
- 3.05 Various issues were raised through the consultation process and a number of proposals have been identified for consideration which are set out in appendix 3.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That Council note the outcome of the review and the consultations undertaken.
- 4.02 That the Council designate the locations listed in appendix 3 as polling places.
- 4.03 That the Council agree to look at the suggested alternative polling places for BJA2, PAA1 and PAA2.
- 4.04 That the Council agree to improve access arrangements for BJA2 and EAA2.
- 4.05 That the outcome of the review and the Councils decision be published in addition to other information as is prescribed in the Act and Regulations.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 No specific financial implications.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 No specific anti-poverty implications.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 So far as possible venues for polling places have been selected that are reasonably central within the polling district so as to limit the need for electors to travel to them by car.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 No specific equalities implications.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 No specific equalities implications.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 No further consultation required.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 The formal consultation period ran from Monday 22 September to Friday 17 October 2014. A public notice was placed on the Council's website and in local council offices and libraries, giving notice of the review and full details of the review. In addition the following specific consultations were undertaken:

- a) With Members of the Council, by way of an email/letter dated 22 September which gave details of the review and included, in particular, the Council's consultation document, schedule of existing polling districts and polling places, with their respective electorate and a questionnaire.
- b) An email to each of the Members of Parliament with the explanatory information.
- c) An email to each of the Assembly Members with the explanatory information.
- d) An email/letter to each Town/Community Council with the explanatory information.
- e) The Returning Officer for the Alyn & Deeside and Delyn Constituencies with the same explanatory information.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Schedule of Comments Received
Appendix 2 – Returning Officer's Comments
Appendix 3 – Proposals for Consideration

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006
- Public Notice of the Review
- Letters to those listed in paragraph 11.01
- Review Statement – Draft Proposal
- Returning Officer's Comments
- Responses made to the Consultation

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