

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Governance and Ethics Committee

1 September 2022

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| Report title | Update on polling district and polling place review | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet member for Governance and Equalities | |
| Accountable director | David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer | |
| Originating service | Electoral Services | |
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| Report has been considered by | Election Board | 23 June 2022 |

Recommendations for noting:

The Governance and Ethics Committee is asked to note:

1. The outcome of the public consultation.
2. The next steps for the polling district and polling place review.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the outcomes of the public consultation.
- 1.2 To provide an update on the next steps to the review.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The polling district and polling place review consultation launched on 18 July 2022 and closed on 26 August 2022.

3.0 Polling district and polling place review consultation

- 3.1 The public consultation was shared across all of the available communication channels: councillor weekly email, twitter, Facebook, resident's newsletter, website and city people. Leaflets promoting the consultation were also sent to 105,000 properties with the annual canvass forms. Emails were also sent to Councillors, MP's and organisations with a particular expertise in advocating for people with various disabilities.
- 3.2 All councillors were invited to ward drop-in sessions to respond to the consultation.
- 3.3 The public consultation closed on Friday 26 August 2022. A verbal update will be provided at the Committee to confirm the number of responses received in total and a high-level summary of the feedback.

4.0 Polling district and polling place review timescales

- 4.1 Throughout September, the final scheme will be prepared taking on board all of the feedback received. This will be shared with councillors in group meetings as an opportunity to provide feedback on the final scheme.
- 4.2 The next steps to the review are outlined in the table below:

| Activity | Date |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Collate results from consultation and prepare final scheme of polling districts and stations (including engagement of members through group meetings) | 29 August 2022 – 30 September 2022 |
| Final scheme of polling districts and stations taken to Governance and Ethics Committee for recommendation to full council | 20 October 2022 |
| Final recommendations presented to Full Council | 2 November 2022 |
| Publish electoral register on new boundaries | 1 December 2022 |

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| Poll cards will be sent to electors with new polling station details on | March 2023 |
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5.0 Access to electoral registers

- 5.1 On 1 December 2022, the revised electoral register will be published on the new wards. As such, existing members of the council will only be entitled to the parts of the register that they are currently elected members for as per the regulation 103 of the Representation of the People Rules 2001. For example, this would mean receiving parts of the register for the existing St Peters ward, not the full St Peters ward as per the new boundary.
- 5.2 Political parties are entitled to the full electoral register at any time on request.
- 5.3 All candidates standing for election will be entitled to the electoral register for the ward they are standing for on 27 March 2023.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The next steps scheduled in the polling district and polling place review will be undertaken utilising existing staffing resources provided for with the current electoral registration net expenditure budget of £362,000. [GE/09082022/A]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 All preparations outlined in this report are in line with the statutory provisions covering the review of polling district and places. [SZ/16082022/P]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 An equalities analysis has been undertaken to identify the positive and negative impacts against the key equality themes and solutions identified to mitigate against negative impacts. This is included in the background paper.
- 8.2 Local authorities have a duty to review the accessibility of all polling places to disabled voters and ensure that every polling place, and prospective polling place, for which it is responsible is accessible to disabled voters 'so far as is reasonable and practicable'.
- 8.3 Groups and individuals with expertise in access issues within Wolverhampton have been invited to respond to the draft proposal during the public consultation phase.

9.0 All other Implications

- 9.1 There are no other implications arising from this report at the current time.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 Boundary Review Implementation Plan and Polling District and Polling Place Review, Governance and Ethics Committee, 7 July 2022: [mgConvert2PDF.aspx](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx) ([moderngov.co.uk](https://www.moderngov.co.uk))