

Cheltenham Borough Council
Council – 13 October 2014
Review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations
Report of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)

Accountable member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Jon Walklett
Accountable officer	Chief Executive, Andrew North
Ward(s) affected	All - with specific impact on Charlton Park Ward
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>The council has a statutory duty to review its polling districts, polling places and polling stations, to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that the polling stations are accessible to all electors including those with special needs.</p> <p>A consultation exercise has been completed and consideration has been given to the views put forward.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That the following changes to polling districts, places and stations be approved:</p> <p>Charlton Park Ward, Polling District EA – split the current polling district of EA so that electors living in the north of the polling district listed below vote at Cheltenham East Community Fire and Rescue Station, Keynsham Road</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Argyll Road Avenalls Parade Avenall Court, Avenalls Parade Chelsea Close College Gate College Road Corpus Street Keynsham Road Keynshambury Road Knightsbridge Crescent London Road Old Bath Road Numbers 1-43 and 4-28 Sadlers Court, Old Bath Road Priory Place Sandford Mill Close Sandford Mill Road Sandford Park Place Southgate Drive Westminster Close</p> <p>and create a new polling district ED for the remaining electors living in the roads listed below and for these electors to continue to vote at</p>

Sacred Hearts Parish Hall, Moorend Road
Charlton Gardens
Charlton Lane
Charlton Park Drive
Charlton Park Gate
Cirencester Road
Evelyn Close
Greatfield Drive
Greenhills Close
King Arthur Close
Sandringham Court, King Arthur Close
King George Close
Balmoral Court, King George Close
King Henry Close
King William Drive
Moorend Road
Old Bath Road numbers 130-178
Sandy Lane
The Avenue

The costs that will be incurred for the new polling station at Cheltenham East Community Fire and Rescue Station will be £360.

That the full list of polling districts, polling places and polling stations as set out in appendix E and F are published for a further period of six weeks, during which time individuals have the right to make representations to the Electoral Commission.

Financial implications	<p>The additional cost will be funded from existing revenue budgets.</p> <p>Contact officer: Nina Philippidis, Business Partner Accountant nina.philippidis@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264121</p>
Legal implications	<p>The review has been carried out in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Commission's Guidance. There are no legal implications.</p> <p>Contact officer: Peter Lewis, peter.lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272012</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>There are no HR implications as a direct result of this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Richard Hall, Richard.hall@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01594 812634, 01242 774972</p>
Key risks	<p>There is a risk that individuals in the new polling district of EA who have been used to voting at Sacred Heart Parish Hall, may be unable to locate the new polling station or go to the incorrect polling place. Poll cards will be issued by the Returning Officer to each elector providing details of the new location.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>There are no community or corporate implications</p>

Environmental and climate change implications	
Property/Asset Implications	Contact officer: David Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1** The Parliamentary Elections Regulations 2006 introduced the requirement for each local authority to carry out a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations every four years which commenced in 2007. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places requiring each local authority to carry out the review by 31 January 2015 and every 5 years thereafter. The reason for the review is to ensure that all electors in the Cheltenham Borough Council area have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and to ensure that polling stations are accessible to all electors, including those with special needs. The Acting Returning Officers for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Parliamentary Constituencies (for the areas within the Borough of Cheltenham) have made formal comment as part of this review, both into the existing polling stations and the polling stations that would probably be used based on the newly recommended polling places.
- 1.2** **What is not being reviewed** – The Cheltenham or Tewkesbury Parliamentary Constituency, Gloucestershire County Council Electoral Division, Cheltenham Borough Council Ward, Parish Ward boundaries.

2. Responses from interested parties

- 2.1** Following the closing date for the review, as well as the formal comments from the Parliamentary Acting Returning Officers for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury (see paragraph 3 below), correspondence was received from four other sources.
- 2.2** The first correspondence was from Councillor Duncan Smith with regard to Charlton Park Ward, and the proposed Polling District EA, who felt that there was no need to create a new polling station and suggested that the most cost effective option would be for these electors to vote at Highbury Church Hall, or alternatively the Lido. See plan A
- 2.3** Highbury Church Hall - The Morton Brown room is currently in use for polling district AB but the Church hall houses additional rooms in the building. Upon further enquiries it has been discovered that even though two of the additional rooms would be of ample size they would not, however, meet the access requirements that all polling stations require. It would not be appropriate to place two polling stations in the Morton Brown room owing to the size of the electorate in polling district AB (2235) and that the stations would be for different Borough Wards. The additional costs that would be incurred would be the same as the costs for Cheltenham East Community Fire and Rescue Service.

The current polling station situated at the Lido is for College Ward, the option to site an additional portakabin for polling district EA was explored last year, with costs amounting to £1079.00.

- 2.4** The second correspondence was from Councillor Paul Baker with regard to Charlton Park Ward and the proposed Polling District EA and proposed Polling Station for those electors, who was delighted with the proposals and informed that he and Councillor Klara Sudbury had conducted a residents survey earlier in the year and obtained a good response and strong support for the change.

- 2.5 The third correspondence was from Councillor Klara Sudbury with agreement from Councillor Paul Baker with regard to Charlton Park Ward and the proposed new polling districts of EA and ED with the following suggestion:
- 130 – 178 Old Bath Road should be removed from the proposed polling district of EA and added to the proposed polling district ED. See Plan A
- 2.6 The fourth correspondence was from Councillor Chris Ryder and Councillor Anne Regan with regard to Warden Hill Ward, Warden Hill Ward of the Parish of Leckhampton with Warden Hill Polling District TB with the following suggestion:-
- Create a new polling district for the roads in the south east corner of polling district TB. Create a new polling place and station at The Brizen Young Peoples Centre, Up Hatherley Way for the electors in the newly created polling district.

The new polling district would comprise of 510 electors of which 98 are postal voters.

The Brizen Young Peoples Centre has disabled access and parking and would be available for all elections. The total costs that would be incurred for the additional polling station would be £561.50.

- 2.7 On exploring the possibility of siting a polling station at the The Brizen Young Peoples Centre, it was noted that although the venue is closer to many of the properties, electors travelling to the polling station on foot are able to use the cut-through paths to St. Christophers Church Hall. There are no cut-through paths to Brizen Youth Centre and electors would also need to cross a busy road. Therefore as the Elections Office has not received any complaints or comments from electors living in the south east corner of the polling district, the existing polling district and polling station will remain unaltered at the present time. See Plan B.

3. Responses from the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Acting Returning Officers (ARO)

- 3.1 A full list of the Cheltenham Constituency polling stations is set out at appendix C and the Tewkesbury Constituency polling stations at appendix D along with the AROs' comments. There is one proposed change as set out below.
- 3.2 **Charlton Park Ward, Polling District EA** – Following the review polling districts, polling places and polling stations of Charlton Park Ward carried out last year at the time a suitable alternative could not be found for the electors living in the north of polling district EA. The new Cheltenham East Community Fire and Rescue Station although not in the Ward is substantially nearer for these electors. The building is more than adequate to house a polling station and has very good disabled access.

4. Consultation and feedback

- 4.1 A consultation exercise was carried out and proposals and comments on the review were requested. Views and comments were requested from the following:-
- Local MPs
 - Cheltenham Borough Councillors
 - Gloucestershire County Councillors
 - Election Agents
 - Various Disabled/Neighbourhood Projects etc.

5. Performance management – monitoring and review

5.1 The electoral team always undertake an informal review of polling stations after each election to identify any issues which may arise from time to time.

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Risk Assessment2. Plan A map of Polling Districts EA and ED3. Plan B map of Polling District TB4. Appendix C – ARO comments Cheltenham5. Appendix D – ARO comments Tewkesbury6. Appendix E – Cheltenham list for publication7. Appendix F – Tewkesbury list for publication
Background information	None

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the polling station changes, elector unsure of location of polling station	RO	23 September	1	1	2	A	Poll card with note highlighting Polling Station location may have changed. Helpline and contact details on poll card	Next election	Electoral Registration Manager	Divisional risk register
Explanatory notes											
<p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											