

Cheltenham Borough Council

Council – 16 December 2024

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Accountable member:

Councillor Alisha Lewis, Cabinet Member Finance and Assets

Accountable officer:

Paul Jones, Deputy Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key Decision: No

Executive summary:

In accordance with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 the Council is required to complete a full review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations every five years. The review must be held within a 16 month period between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 with a public consultation forming part of that review.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has completed its review of the electoral arrangements for Gloucestershire County Council. The Order making the changes is expected to be made by the end of the year. The changes will be effective on 1 May 2025, but for the purpose of proceedings relating to the elections, changes to the register can be made in the revised register published after the Order has been made.

The Council has a statutory duty 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.

Recommendations:

Council approves: -

- **All Saints Ward – to merge polling district AC with polling district AA and to change the polling place / station for electors within the new polling district to All Saints Church, All Saints Road**
- **Benhall, the Reddings & Fiddler’s Green Ward – to change the polling place / station for polling district CA and for electors to vote at Auditorium, The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane**
- **Benhall, the Reddings & Fiddler’s Green Ward – to change the polling place / station for polling district CB and for electors to vote at Overflow Room, The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane**
- **Charlton Park Ward – to merge polling district ED with polling district EA and for electors in the new polling district to vote at Cheltenham East Fire & Rescue Station, Keynsham Road**
- **Charlton Park Ward – Create new polling district ED (current polling district EE) and for electors to vote at Old Patesians Sports and Social Club, Everest Road**
- **College Ward – to merge polling district FD with polling district FC and for electors in the new polling district to vote at Portakabin, Town Hall, Imperial Square**
- **College Ward – create new polling district FD (current polling district FE) and for electors to vote at Emmanuel Church, Fairfield Parade**
- **Hesters Way Ward – for electors in polling district GB to continue to vote at St Marks and HW Community Centre, but in the event that the building is not available for electors to vote at Sports Hall, Oasis Centre, Cassin Drive**
- **Lansdown Ward – to merge polling district HD with polling district HC and for electors in the new polling district to vote at St Gregorys Old Priory, 70 Clarence Street**
- **Park Ward – to merge polling district KC with polling district KB and for electors to vote at Bethesda Methodist Church Hall, Great Norwood Street**
- **Pittville Ward – to merge polling district LC with polling district LA and for electors in the new polling district to vote at Pittville Pump Room, East / West Approach Drive**
- **Pittville Ward – to create new polling district LC (current polling district LD) and for electors to vote at Pittville Pump Room, East / West Approach Drive for all elections except for Parliamentary elections when electors will vote at Prestbury Hall, Bouncers Lane**
- **Springbank Ward – for electors in polling district NC to vote at Hesters Way Childrens Centre, Dill Avenue at all elections**
- **St Mark’s Ward - to change the polling station for electors in polling district OA to vote at The Umbrella, Orchard Way**
- **St Mark’s Ward – for electors in polling district OB to continue to vote at St Marks & HW Community Centre, Brooklyn Road, but if the building is unavailable to vote at Hesters Way Library, Goldsmith Road**
- **Swindon Village Ward – change current polling district RC – transfer the following streets/properties from RC to new polling district RD**
 - **Addis Road**
 - **Bridge Street**
 - **Cobham Road**

- **Compton Road**
- **Elm Close**
- **Elm Street**
- **Gardners Lane**
- **Hope Street**
- **Malvern Street**
- **Queen Street**
- **Richards Road**
- **Sun Street**
- **Swindon Road**
- **Tewkesbury Road**
- **Cobham Court, Tewkesbury Road**
- **Waterloo Street**
- **Cypress Court, Waterloo Street**
- **Worcester Street**

The electors remaining in the new polling district RC to vote at St Nicolas Church Hall, Swindon Lane

- **Swindon Village Ward – create new polling district RD to include the streets/properties being transferred from polling district RC and for electors to vote at Sports Hall, Gas Green Youth Centre, Baker Street**
- **Up Hatherley Ward – for electors in polling district SD to vote at St Margarets Hall, Coniston Road at all elections**
- **Warden Hill Ward – for electors in polling district TD to vote at The Annexe, St Margarets Hall, Coniston Road at all elections**

1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

There are no direct financial or property implications.

Signed off by: Gemma Bell, Director of Finance and Assets, gemma.bell@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.2 Legal implications

The council has a statutory duty to review its polling districts, polling places and polling stations. The council must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area 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 every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.

Signed off by: One Legal – (01684) 272012

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

As the changes suggested are ensuring there is increased accessibility to all electors to travel to

polling stations, this has a positive environmental implication, reducing barriers to sustainable and active travel when voting within the borough.

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, Maizy.McCann@cheltenham.gov.uk

1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities: *[please delete as appropriate]*

- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

All of the polling stations have been reviewed and assessed to ensure that they are as accessible as possible to all electors.

2 Background

2.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a new timetable of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts, polling places and polling stations requiring each local authority to carry out an initial review by 31 January 2015 and then every five 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.

2.2 What is not being reviewed – The Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Parliamentary constituencies, Gloucestershire County Council electoral divisions, Cheltenham Borough Council wards, Parish and Parish ward boundaries

3 Reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has completed its review of the electoral arrangements for Gloucestershire County Council. The new electoral divisions are now coterminous with the Borough wards, enabling several of the small polling districts to be merged with another polling district within the Borough ward and the new County electoral division.

3.2 To ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable and that polling stations are accessible to all electors.

4 Alternative options considered

4.1 No other alternative polling places / stations were considered.

5 Consultation and feedback

5.1 A consultation was carried out and proposals and comments on the review were requested. Views and comments were requested from the following: -

- Members of Parliament for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury
- Cheltenham Borough Councillors
- Gloucestershire County Councillors
- Local Political Parties
- Parish Councils
- Libraries
- Religious Organisations
- Community Centres
- Disability Groups

5.2 Following the closing date of the consultation for the review, as well as the formal comments for the Parliamentary Returning Officers for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury constituencies (see paragraph 5.5 below) correspondence was received from two other sources.

5.3 For Charlton Park Ward, Councillor Steve Harvey commented that the proposed polling places / stations for the ward are acceptable.

5.4 For Hesters Way Ward and St Mark's Ward, Councillor Sandra Holliday informed that there are a couple of groups who are interested in taking on the lease for St Mark's and Hesters Way Community Centre, Brooklyn Road. Both groups have agreed that if they become the leaseholder, the building can continue to be used as polling place and polling stations for all future elections.

5.5 Responses from the Acting Returning Officers (ARO) for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury constituencies – A full list of the proposed Cheltenham constituency polling districts and polling places / stations is set out in appendix iii and the proposed Tewkesbury constituency polling districts and polling places / stations is set out in appendix iv along with the AROs comments.

6 Key risks

6.1 Electors unsure of which county division they live in

6.2 Electors unsure of the location of their polling station

Report author:

Kim Smith, Electoral Services Manager, kim.smith@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment

- ii. Equality Impact Assessment – Screening – (to be included in all Cabinet and Council reports)
- iii. ARO comments Cheltenham
- iv. ARO comments Tewkesbury
- v. Cheltenham constituency list of polling districts, places and stations for publication
- vi. Tewkesbury constituency list of polling districts, places and stations for publication
- vii. Maps of 60 polling districts detailing polling districts and polling stations

Background information:

New County Council electoral divisions within Cheltenham Borough

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/gloucestershire#47541>

The Gloucestershire (Electoral Changes) Order 2025 (Draft)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2025/9780348265668/data.pdf>

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If electors are unsure of what electoral division they are in then this may cause confusion on election day.	RO	2	3	6	Reduce	Press and social media releases to inform residents about the boundary changes and new electoral divisions	Electoral Services Manager	1 May 2025
	If the polling station changes, then electors may be unsure of location of polling station.	RO	2	3	6	Reduce	<p>Poll card with note highlighting that the polling station has changed. Helpline and contact details included on the poll card. Poll cards are delivered at least four weeks before the election</p> <p>Press and social media releases to inform residents to check their poll card and that their polling station may have changed and include link to webpage 'Find my polling</p>	Electoral Services Manager	March / April 2025

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1 - 25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
							station'		

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Screening)

1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

a. Person responsible for this Equality Impact Assessment

Officer responsible: Kim Smith	Service Area: Electoral Services
Title: Electoral Services Manager	Date of assessment: 11/11/2024
Signature: Kim Smith	

b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Other

If other, please specify: Compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

Is this new or existing?

Other

Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project

In accordance with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, Cheltenham Borough Council is required to complete a full review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations every five years. The review must be held within a 16 month period between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025

d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

For Council to approve the recommendations in the report.

Objectives:

To ensure that every polling place within the Borough is accessible to all electors, and must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons

Outcomes:	All polling places have been assessed to ensure that they meet the accessibility requirements.
Benefits:	All electors have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

e. What are the expected impacts?	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	No
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	No impact expected
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
The changes that have been recommended should make the polling places more convenient for the electors.	

If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

f. Identify next steps as appropriate	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment	
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	

Please move on to Stage 2 if required ([intranet link](#)).