

COUNCIL:

30 November 2023

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

Reason for this Report

1. The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires local authorities to conduct a review of parliamentary polling districts and places at least every five years. The principal reason for conducting the review is to ensure that polling is accessible for all electors and the Council must:
 - seek to ensure that electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, and
 - seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, polling places are accessible to all electors including those who are disabled.

Background

2. It is the responsibility of local authorities to divide their areas into polling districts for the purpose of Parliamentary elections, and to designate a polling place within each district. Local government polling districts are based on these Parliamentary polling districts. Cardiff comprises 28 Electoral Divisions, each of which is divided into a number of polling districts. There are currently 204 polling districts in Cardiff.
3. A polling place is the area or building within which a polling station must be selected by the Returning Officer. If no polling place is designated, the law provides that the polling district is to be taken as the polling place.
4. The previous review was completed for implementation by 1 December 2019, to coincide with the publication of the new register of electors.
5. The current review must be completed by 31 January 2025, but for practical purposes, the review has been designed so that it is completed for

implementation on 1 December 2023, to coincide with the publication of the new register of electors, and to be completed in time for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024 and UK parliamentary election (date unknown but to be held before January 2025).

6. For UK parliamentary elections, the powers and duties of the Returning Officer are discharged by the designated 'Acting Returning Officer'. In Cardiff, the Acting Returning Officer is the Electoral Registration Officer appointed by the Council (the Chief Executive, Mr. Paul Orders), referred to in this report as the Returning Officer.

Issues

7. The choice of fully accessible buildings for use as polling stations is limited, and they are not always located in an area which is convenient for electors. Electoral Services staff, on behalf of the Returning Officer, undertake a continuous assessment of the premises used as polling stations, in order to seek alternative more suitable solutions where necessary. Furthermore, the review has sought to minimise disruption to schools and to find a permanent polling place to cease the use of hiring portacabins wherever practicable.
8. Prior to any elections the Returning Officer will advise political parties of the actual polling stations to be used, and in making that decision will consider any comments made as part of this review.

Consultation

9. The Returning Officer's proposals along with a public notice of this review was published and included on the Council's website on 2 October 2023 inviting all stakeholders and electors to submit representations. Details of the review and how to make representations were also shared on social media. Stakeholders were able to submit online comments or complete a paper form. The consultation finished on 27 October 2023.
10. The Returning Officer, all ward members, MPs, MSs, Community Council clerks, Disability Forum, 50+ Forum and Cardiff Citizens Panel members as well as the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, the Returning Officer for the Vale of Glamorgan, due to the Cardiff South and Penarth parliamentary cross boundary arrangement and the Returning Officer for Rhondda Cynon Taff have been consulted directly.
11. Comments received as part of the review, including a summarised response are set out in **Appendix A** and recommended polling arrangement adjustments are summarised in Paragraph 12 below, along with reasons for the change in each case. The representations made and final proposals will be available on the Councils website or for public inspection at the Electoral Services Office at County Hall.

Responses and Proposals

12. The review has identified several practical or improved alternative arrangements, full details are included in **Appendix B**. These include:

Polling District Changes

Whitchurch and Tongwnlais

Removal of polling district MG resulting in the polling station (Portacabin, Silverbirch, Whitchurch, CF14 1EL) not being required.

Coed Adrian will merge with polling district MF.

Silver Birch Close will merge with polling district MI.

Fairwater

Moving 63 properties (93 Pentrebane Road - 217 Pentrebane Road / odds only) from WA to WB to tidy up polling district boundary line with ward boundary line (not essential).

Polling Place / Stations - Proposed Changes

It is proposed to continue to designate each polling place as within the general vicinity of each location utilised for polling station purposes. The Returning Officer is responsible for providing polling stations within the polling places designated by Council. It is important to allow some flexibility in the designation of the polling places to accommodate potential future changes in circumstances.

The following table identifies the proposed changes to be made to the existing polling places / stations:

Ward	Designation	Existing polling Station	Proposed polling Station	Reason for change
Cathays	BA	Cardiff Muslim Primary School, Merthyr Street, Cardiff, CF24 4JL	Sbarc Spark, Maindy Road, Cathays, Cardiff CF24 4HQ	Previous polling station unavailable for hire. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
	BB	Cardiff Muslim Primary School, Merthyr Street, Cardiff, CF24 4JL	Sbarc Spark, Maindy Road, Cathays, Cardiff CF24 4HQ	
Pontprennau and Old St Mellons	29B	Portacabin In Car Park, Asda Supermarket, Pontprennau, Cardiff, CF23 8NL	Pontprennau Community Church Centre, Heol Pontprennau, Cardiff, CF23 8LL	Improved accessibility for voters and cost saving.

Ward	Designation	Existing polling Station	Proposed polling Station	Reason for change
Plasnewydd	EA	The Cabin, Roath Park Primary School, Penywain Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 4BB	Tabernacle Cardiff, Pen-y-wain Road, Roath, Cardiff CF24 4GG	No impact on local school. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
Lisvane and Thornhill	ID	Thornhill Primary School, Heol Hir/Hillcrest Close, Thornhill, Cardiff, CF14 9LA	The Thornhill Church Centre, Excalibur Drive, Thornhill, Cardiff, CF14 9GA	No impact on local school. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
	IF	Thornhill Primary School, Heol Hir/Hillcrest Close, Thornhill, Cardiff, CF14 9LA	The Thornhill Church Centre, Excalibur Drive, Thornhill, Cardiff, CF14 9GA	
Llandaff North	JC	All Saints Church, Gabalfa Road, Llandaff North, Cardiff, CF14 2JH	Llandaff North & Gabalfa Hub, Gabalfa Avenue, Llandaff North, Cardiff, CF14 2HU	Council owned building, improved accessibility for voters and cost saving.
Whitchurch and Tongwynlais	MB	Portacabin, Westbourne Road Shops, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 2BR	The Lounge, Whitchurch Rugby Sports & Social Club, Samuels Crescent, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 2TH	Improved accessibility for voters and cost saving.
Grangetown	OI	The Salvation Army Citadel, 234 Corporation Road, Grangetown, Cardiff, CF11 7AN	Grange Pavilion, Grange Gardens, Cardiff, CF11 7LJ	Previous polling station unavailable for hire. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
Caerau	TE	St Timothy's Church, Heol Pennar, Caerau, Cardiff, CF5 5NX	4th Glamorgan Homeguard Club, 10 Church Road, Cardiff, CF5 5LQ	Previous polling station unavailable for hire. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
	TF	St Timothy's Church, Heol Pennar, Caerau, Cardiff, CF5 5NX	4 th Glamorgan Homeguard Club, 10 Church Road, Cardiff, CF5 5LQ	

Ward	Designation	Existing polling Station	Proposed polling Station	Reason for change
Canton	UH	Gym Room, House of Sport 1, Clos Parc Morgannwg, Cardiff, CF11 8AW	Church In the Avenue, Leckwith Gospel Hall, 2-4 Leckwith Avenue, Canton, Cardiff, CF11 8HQ	Previous polling station hire conflict with potential count venue hire. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.
Riverside	ZD	Canton Community Centre, Leckwith Road, Canton, Cardiff, CF11 8HG	Canton Library Hub, Library Street, Cardiff CF5 1QD	Previous polling station unavailable for hire. New proposal suitable with good accessibility.

Legal Implications

13. The Council is required (under section 18C Representation of the People Act 1983 ('the Act'), inserted by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013) to undertake a review of all the polling districts and polling places in its area every five years. The current review must be carried out and completed during the 16 month period starting on 1st October 2023, which means it must be completed by 31st January 2025. The review must be conducted in accordance with the parameters and procedure set out in the Act and regulations issued under it (the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006).
14. The law requires that:
 - a) each community in Wales is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply;
 - b) the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors;
 - c) the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district); and
 - d) the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

15. As part of the review, 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; and
 - 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.
16. The statutory procedure for the review requires the Council to:
- publish a notice of the holding of a review;
 - consult the Returning Officer for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area;
 - publish all representations made by a Returning Officer within 30 days of receipt by posting a copy of them at the local authority's office and in at least one conspicuous place in their area and, if the authority maintains a website, by placing a copy on the authority's website;
 - seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the Returning Officer(s); and
 - on completion of a review, give reasons for its decisions and publish:
 - a. all correspondence sent to a Returning Officer in connection with the review;
 - b. all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
 - c. all representations made by any person in connection with the review;
 - d. the minutes of any meeting held by the council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;
 - e. details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review; and
 - f. details of the places where the results of the review have been published.
15. The duty to divide constituencies into polling districts is a non-executive function (pursuant to the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Functions and Responsibilities)(Wales) Regulations 2007, Schedule 1, D, paragraph 8, which may be determined by full Council, having regard to the legal requirements set out above.

Financial Implications

16. The proposed changes to the polling arrangements involve a reduction in the requirement for THREE portable temporary hire units and their logistical siting, delivery and collection costs.

17. The associated savings per temporary hire unit are summarised below:

Portacabin Unit Hire Charge including Insurance (per unit)	£1,000.00
Delivery Set up and Removal of Units (per unit)	£1,000.00
Conveyancing of election equipment (per unit)	£60.00
Electricity supply to portacabin (per unit)	£30.00
Total Cost (per unit)	£2,090.00

18. The proposal involves greater utilisation of permanent polling stations, to accommodate the reduction in temporary hire units, within existing permanent polling station hire costs.

19. The saving to the Council relates to Local Government Elections and by-elections, with the costs of running an electoral event met by the relevant democratic body.

RECOMMENDATION

20. That the Council:

- a. Approves the 2 polling district and 13 polling place changes as noted in paragraph 12.
- b. Notes that the Electoral Registration Officer will implement any consequential changes to the register of electors.
- c. Designates each polling place as within the general vicinity of each location utilised for polling station purposes and delegates authority to the Returning Officer to make changes where necessary, for example, where a building becomes unavailable at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, or where a more suitable building is identified
- d. Makes no other changes to the polling districts.
- e. Notes the Returning Officer shall confirm the polling stations within each polling district and place prior to elections, having regard to the proposals set out in paragraph 12 above and any other relevant factors pertaining at that time.

Gary Jones
Head of Democratic Services

24 November 2023

Appendix A: Consultation Responses received as part of the Polling Districts and Places Review.

Appendix B: Summary of Proposed Alterations to Polling Districts and Places (Stations)

Background Papers:

Representation of the People Act 1983 Section 18A

[Representation of the People Act 1983 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Electoral Commission Guidance: Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

[Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations | Electoral Commission](#)

[Adolygiadau o ddisbarthiadau etholiadol, manau pleidleisio a gorsafoedd pleidleisio | Electoral Commission](#)