

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Licensing and Regulatory Committee

11 November 2022

TITLE:	Polling Station Mini Interim Review
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Paul Roberts - Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	Marion Hancock – Senior Elections Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	Biddulph North, Biddulph West, Checkley, Churnet, Dane, Horton and Leek North

Appendices Attached:

Appendix A Polling Station Mini Interim Review – Proposed Changes

1. Reason for the Report

To review the suitability of voting arrangements in the District of Staffordshire Moorlands and report on the findings. Any changes to polling stations as a result of this review will come into force with immediate effect

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

2.1 The Committee approves the proposals setting out changes to voting arrangements, polling places and polling stations as detailed in Appendix A of the report, subject to there being no adverse comments received from the publication of the Returning Officer's recommendations.

2.2 The revised arrangements take immediate effect.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Council must designate a polling place for every polling district. In determining where polling places should be located, the Council must attempt to ensure that all 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 electors, including those who are disabled. Each polling station in the District has been reviewed in accordance with the statutory requirements. Since the review in 2019 a limited number of polling stations in the District have been reviewed again as part of this mini interim review due to changes in polling places available.

3.2 The mini interim review has resulted from information gathered by Polling Station contacts, Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors who were on duty at the previous two elections. In addition we have consulted elected members, members of the public and local access groups.

3.3 The Returning Officer for elections, and the MP have been consulted on the proposed changes. The Returning Officer's comments are included in Appendix A. The Returning Officer's final proposals have been published and the deadline for receipt of further comments was 30th October 2022.

3.4 The proposed changes as a result of the review after the consultation exercise are set out at Appendix A. The arrangements will continue to be reviewed periodically and further formal reviews will take place every five years.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The proposals within the report help to support the environment by enabling residents to vote at suitable, accessible facilities in the interests of the democratic process.

5. Options and Analysis

5.1 The options for proposed changes are found within the report and Appendix A. The Committee could decide not to support the proposed changes. The changes have been proposed after reviewing the responses to extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders and are recommended to improve residents' experience of electoral participation.

5.2 If the Committee decides to support the recommendations it will assist the Electoral Services Team to administer the next scheduled election effectively and will improve residents' experience of engagement with the electoral process.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

No implications

6.2 Workforce



No implications

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Diversity and Equality Policies.

6.4 Financial Considerations

None directly

6.5 Legal

As referred to within the report.

6.6 Sustainability

No implications

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

A full consultation exercise has been undertaken ahead of analysing the options which are found in Appendix A.

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning) and Monitoring Officer

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Contact details

Marion Hancock
Senior Elections Officer
marion.hancock@highpeak.gov.uk
Tel: 01538 395500

Background and Detail

- 7.1 Each relevant Local Authority in the United Kingdom must designate a polling place for each polling district in the Parliamentary Constituency. The polling place is usually a building within the polling district and the polling station is usually within the polling place. It is the duty of the Returning Officer to provide a sufficient number of polling stations and allocate the electors to those polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks the most convenient. Section 18 of the Representation of

the People Act 1983 requires these arrangements to be reviewed every 5 years. The previous review took place in 2019.

- 7.2 There are a number of changes that have taken place since the last formal polling station review as a result of buildings becoming unavailable in the intervening period. The Oasis Community Church, Biddulph, The Day Room Washington Close, Biddulph and Rushton Methodist Church have closed or are now unavailable. It is proposed to move permanently to St Lawrence Church Hall, Biddulph Methodist Church and Rushton First School.
- 7.3 A request to move from Christchurch Church Hall Tean had been made from our Health and Safety Officer due to the size of the building and the size of the electorate. It has been suggested and is proposed to move to Great Wood Hall Community Centre as a suitable alternative venue
- 7.4 Kingsley Holt Methodist Church has closed but has been bought and is run by Kingsley Holt Centre. It is proposed to move on a temporary basis to Kingsley Village Hall until renovation works are completed and Kingsley Holt Centre is available.
- 7.5 A request to move from Knypersley First School and Beresford Memorial CE (va) School, Leek has been received. It is proposed to move to Life Stream Church, Knypersley which was used for the 2021 Elections and Haregate Community Centre.
- 7.6 A request to move from Stake Gutter Farm, Upperhulme has been received. It is propose to move to The Winking Man, Upperhulme which was used for the 2021 Elections.
- 7.7 A notice of a mini interim review was published on the Council's website on the 12th August 2022 together with documents made available for inspection at Moorlands House, Leek. This has allowed Councillors and members of the public to access background information in respect of the proposals within this report and to enable the Council to understand the views of members and residents. The closing date for comments was 15th September 2022.
- 7.8 As a result of the consultation process the Council has received the following representations which are included in Appendix A:
- Comments from Leek North Ward Councillors
 - Comments from Horton Ward Councillor
 - Comments from Churnet Ward Councillor