

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit & Regulatory Committee

27th November 2024

TITLE:	Mini Review of Polling Stations
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Barrow - Executive Councillor for Corporate Services and Finance
CONTACT OFFICER:	Angela Sherratt – Senior Elections Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	Hadfield South, Tintwistle and Whitfield

Appendice Attached:

Appendix A Polling District – Proposed Changes

1. Reason for the Report

To review some of the polling districts and voting arrangements in the Borough of High Peak and report on the findings. Any changes to polling stations as a result of this review will come into force for the 1st May 2025 County Council elections.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i) The Committee approves the proposals setting out changes to polling districts, polling places and polling stations as detailed at Appendix A of the report.
- ii) The revised arrangements take effect from 1st May 2025.

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 Borough has recently been reviewed in accordance with the statutory requirements. Since the review in 2023 a limited number of polling stations in the Borough have been reviewed again due to changes in polling place availability.

- 3.2 The review has been informed by information gathered by Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors who were on duty at the previous last two elections. In addition we have consulted elected members for the Polling Districts affected, who have confirmed their support for the proposed changes.
- 3.3 The Returning Officer for elections has been consulted on the proposed changes. The Returning Officer's comments are included in Appendix A.
- 3.4 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 inspecting the alternative locations and consulting with the relevant Borough Councillors 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

Section 18C of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 places a duty on the Council to conduct regular reviews of polling districts and polling places. Statutory reviews take place every five years. Section 18(c)(5) provides for the ability for polling station reviews at any time. The proposal in this report have emerged after considering the voter experience at previous elections, and feedback from interested parties.

6.6 Sustainability

No implications

6.7 Risk Assessment

All buildings have been risk assessed.

7. **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 allot 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 2023.

7.2 A review has been requested for the Polling Place for TI1, TI2 and TI3 at Tintwistle Primary School and a suitable alternative venue has been suggested at Tintwistle Athletic Football Club.

7.3 A review had been requested for the Polling Place for HS1 as the Parenting Room (Hadfield Nursery) is no longer available for use. The alternative available is The Place, Glossopdale School which is already used as a Polling Station for HS2 and HS4 and is located in HS1.

- 7.4 The Vibes Youth Centre Polling Place for WH1 in Whitfield has now closed and an alternative location has been found at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy.
- 7.5 The Internal Consultation process has included staff that work on the Polling Stations and in the relevant areas; Polling Station Inspectors; Borough Councillors of the Polling Districts affected; and the Returning Officer.
- 7.6 The changes have been proposed after inspecting the alternative locations and consulting with the relevant Borough Councillors and are recommended to improve residents' experience of electoral participation.
- 7.7 As a result of the consultation process the Council has received positive responses from the Borough Councillors for Hadfield South, Tintwistle and Whitfield.

Mark Trillo
Executive Director (Governance & Regulatory)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Contact details

Angela Sherratt
Senior Elections Officer
angela.sherratt@highpeak.gov.uk