

Report to:	Council	Date: 17 January 2024
Subject:	Polling District and Place Review	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR	

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to seek a recommendation from Council for approval of polling districts and places within the borough of Bury.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Council notes the comments received during the consultation period.
2. That the Council approves the Acting Returning Officers recommendations that:
 - The use of mobile cabins for polling stations continues but is reviewed regularly by the electoral services team
 - Polling districts 1GD and 1GDA are merged together and named 1GD
 - Polling district 1HD is renamed 1HC
 - Polling district IHE is renamed IHD
3. That the Council requests the Electoral Registration Officer makes the necessary amendments as outlined in Appendix A to polling districts for the publication of the revised Electoral Register.
4. That power to designate polling places in accordance with section 18 and 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 is delegated to the Chief Executive, in their role as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer in consultation with ward councillors, group leaders.

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Background

- 1.1. The following definitions may be helpful when reading this report:

Polling District	Geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.
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Polling Place Buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.

Polling Station The number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

- 1.2. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.
- 1.3. The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.
- 1.4. Full Council on 22 September 2023 approved the start of the consultation period for the polling district and places of Bury.

2. (A)RO proposals

- 2.1. In line with legislation, the (A)RO published recommendations on proposed changes to polling districts and polling places. There were no comments made during the consultation regarding the specific changes in the recommendations.

3. Public and Political Comments

- 3.1. Four comments were received throughout the consultation from members of the public and individual councillors. One was a compliment to the electoral services team and has not been included within this report. No comments were received on behalf of any of the political parties.
- 3.2. Comment 1: 1FF, Bury East: Mosses Centre
 - 3.2.1. Comment: I live near Castle Leisure Centre as do many elderly people. We used to go to Castle Leisure Centre to vote, changing it to the Mosses which is a long way on the other side of Bury was a stupid idea
 - 3.2.2. Response: The Council have reviewed the number of electors eligible to vote at this polling station. As of 1 December 2024, there are 140 electors. It is not financially viable to have a polling station and the associated staff at Castle Leisure Centre for this number of electors especially when turnout is around 40%. This situation will be reviewed on a regular basis and if the number of electors eligible to vote at this polling stations increases we will look to reinstall this polling station.
 - 3.2.3. Recommendation: No change
- 3.3. 2RC, Sedgley
 - 3.3.1. Comment: I live on Bury New Road in Sedgley Park and am just inside the RC boundary meaning I have to vote at Sedgley Park Primary along with over 2000 other voters. However, there is a polling station 30 yards from my house,

which serves just 550 voters. It seems ludicrous that I am unable to vote at this polling station. I think this boundary needs rethinking, the polling booths should be central to the areas they serve.

3.3.2. Response: The local boundaries were reviewed by the Local Boundary Commission in 2021. We understand it is frustrating for residents who live on the boundary lines, but we have to ensure the boundary is in a suitable place. The polling venue covering 2RC is a mobile cabin and would not be able to cope with an increase in electors due to the space available. In the event that we amended the boundaries, there is not an alternative venue that we could use as a polling place which would lead to delays in electors being able to cast their votes.

3.3.3. Recommendation: No change

3.4. Radcliffe North and Ainsworth

3.4.1. Comment: I believe there should be one extra polling station as we have always been one polling station short. We only have 4 polling stations in RN & A when it comes to the General election. We think a temporary polling station on the parking clog carpark would assist this.

3.4.2. Clarification was sought from the commenter to establish whether they thought a new polling district should be created or whether it only required an additional polling place. The commenter confirmed they thought a new polling place was required.

3.4.3. Response: To establish a new polling place, we would have to establish a new polling district to separate the residents who would be eligible to vote at that venue.

3.4.4. Radcliffe North and Ainsworth has 5 polling districts within the ward. These were agreed by the Local Boundary Review in 2021. The polling districts with more residents have double stations within them on polling day to allow quicker voting for residents. This is reviewed in advance of all elections to ensure it meets Electoral Commission guidance for the number of electors allocated to each polling station.

3.4.5. At this time, the number of electors allocated to each polling station is well under the recommended guidelines.

3.4.6. Recommendation: No change

4. Other actions

4.1. During the consultation we were also made aware that

4.2. New Kershaw Centre

4.2.1. The Pupil Referral Unit will be moving into this venue from February 2024. To minimise disruption to students the Council are proposing to use East Ward Primary School school instead.

4.3. Bury East Spoke

4.3.1. This venue has now been renamed to East Bury Family Hub. All electoral documentation including poll cards will be updated to reflect this.

4.4. St Georges Church, Simister

4.4.1. St Georges Church was used in May 2023 as the normal venue Lady Wilton Hall was unavailable. Lady Wilton Hall is now available and will revert to being the preferred polling place for this polling district.

Legal Implications:

The Polling District and Polling Place review is a statutory requirement as set out in the body of the report.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
A(RO)	(Acting) Returning Officer
ERO	Electoral Registration Officer
Polling District	Geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided
Polling Place	Buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.
Polling Station	The number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

Background papers:

13 September 2023 – Polling District and Polling Place Review,
<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=148&MId=3444&Ver=4>