



Review of Polling Districts And Polling Places 2023 Consultation Outcome Report

Outcome of the Polling Districts & Polling Places Review 2023

Background

Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to 'carry out and complete' reviews of polling districts and polling places every five years.

A polling place is provided for electors living within each polling district. The polling place for a polling district is expected to be an area in that district, except where special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the polling district. Any polling district is expected to be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling place.

The aim of the review is to seek that all electors 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, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

The choice of polling place will often be a balance between the quality (access, facilities, etc.) of a building and the distance between the residents and that building compared to other options for polling places.

There is no fixed rule on how to decide how this should be done, however Councils should be able to demonstrate that they followed a reasonable methodology in arriving at their choice.

The Electoral Commission, whilst not having direct responsibility for the review, can intervene where it considers that the reasonable requirements of electors or the needs of disabled electors have not been taken into account.

The Commission recommends that there be no more than 2,500 electors per polling station (excluding electors registered for a postal vote).

Consideration has been given to any further development in the borough in terms of new build residential properties.

The review process

As required, the first stage of the review was giving notice. A Public notice was posted on the Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Website, and consultation information was distributed around the Borough, to local MP's,

RCBC Councillors, Parish Councils, Community Groups and Local Disability Organisations. A list is given in **Appendix 1**.

Information was provided on the Council's website advising members of the public how they were able to submit comments on their polling stations. Additionally, feedback from electors and polling station staff from recent elections has been considered.

Outcome of the consultation

Consideration has been given to each ward, its polling districts and polling places in line with legislative requirements, taking into account the responses to the consultation.

Electoral Services received a total of 9 responses to the consultation. 4 responses were submitted by current RCBC Councillors, 2 were submitted by Parish Councils and the remaining 3 responses were received from members of the public. A copy of these responses, details of action taken and the response provided is provided in **Appendix 2**.

Between the last Polling District and Polling Places Review (2018) and this consultation, nine designated venues became unavailable/unsuitable and had to be replaced for 1 or more elections. None of these venues have since become available/suitable, therefore this consultation has been based upon the most recently used stations which are available on an ongoing basis. A list of places designated in 2018 along with those appointed as a result of this review can be found at **Appendix 3**.

Six of the responses received were in support of the proposed polling venues. The remaining responses raised queries which were considered as part of the review, prior to finalising the delegation.

Final Outcome

The initial proposals of this review were influenced by suitability and availability of venues, whilst taking into consideration any elector or staff feedback from recent elections. The voter numbers for each district, location of venue and access to enable voters the best possible experience were also a prime consideration. As a result of this, where no issues have been identified, or where minor issues can be rectified, the existing polling places that are familiar to local residents will be retained. The intention of retaining venues is to aid voter awareness and turnout.

The total across the borough will be 88 polling districts, 68 polling places and 81 polling stations. A complete list of designated Polling Districts and Polling Places is attached at **Appendix 4**.