

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Licensing and Regulatory Committee

29th November 2019

TITLE:	Polling District and Polling Places Review
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Tony Hall – Customer Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Marion Hancock – Senior Elections Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	All wards

Appendices Attached: **Appendix A – comments received no – changes proposed**
Appendix B – comments received - changes proposed

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To review the polling districts and voting arrangements in the District of Staffordshire Moorlands and report on the findings.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the existing arrangements for voting continue with no changes in the Wards of Alton, Bagnall and Stanley, Biddulph East, Biddulph Moor, Biddulph North, Biddulph South, Biddulph West, Brown Edge and Endon, Caverswall, Checkley, Cheddleton, Churnet, Dane, Hamps Valley, Horton, Ipstones, Leek East, Leek South, Leek West, Manifold and Werrington.
- 2.2 That, following consideration of all the issues raised, the existing arrangements for voting continue for Cellarhead, Cheadle North East, Cheadle West and Leek North as detailed in Appendix A.
- 2.3 That, following consideration of all the issues raised, the existing arrangements for voting in the Cheadle South East Ward at South Moorlands Leisure Centre be moved to The Sports Pavilion, Thorley Drive, Cheadle; and that the existing arrangements for voting in the Forsbrook Ward at William Amory Primary School be moved to Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook Village Hall as detailed in Appendix B.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Since the last polling district review, each polling station in the District has

been reviewed to establish their continued suitability as a polling station.

- 3.2 Information gathered by Polling Station staff, Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Polling Station Inspectors over this year's elections has been reviewed together with consultation from other stakeholders.
- 3.3 The Acting Returning Officer, Simon Baker has been consulted. His findings are included in the appendices.
- 3.4 Any changes that are recommended and approved will come into force for the next scheduled elections, the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, on Thursday 7th May 2020.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report will support the corporate aim of ensuring our services are easily available to all our residents.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 Polling places and stations are reviewed as part of the Council's normal election processes which means that the majority of polling stations are suitable.
- 5.2 Comments have been received regarding space, access and parking arrangements for a few stations. Comments received regarding the use of any alternative venue have been investigated. The Deputy Returning Officer's findings and any comments are set out in Ward order in Appendix A.
- 5.3 Where comments have been received and changes are recommended, the Deputy Returning Officer's comments are set out in Ward order in Appendix B.

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 Consultation

Undertaken with members of the public, MP, Members, County Councillors, Parish Councils and other stakeholders. Where any changes are proposed to the location of polling stations the relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted.

6.8 Risk Assessment

As referred to within the report.

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer

**Web Links and
Background Papers**
Appendices attached

Contact details

Marion Hancock
Marion.hancock@highp
eak.gov.uk

7. Detail

7.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed every four years. The next compulsory review must be started and completed between 1st October 2018 and 31st January 2020. The Council must carry out a full review of the arrangements under which its area is divided into polling districts and by which polling places are provided within these districts. The review covers both the whole area governed by the District Council and any parliamentary constituencies that come within it. In between full reviews, a review must also be undertaken when a change in a particular polling place is proposed to be made.

7.2 The relevant legislation is contained in sections 18 and 31 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006. Guidance on the conduct of reviews is published by the Electoral Commission.

Definitions

“Parliamentary constituency”. The subject of this review is the division of the district and the parliamentary constituency into polling districts and the provision of polling places; the actual constituency boundaries cannot be changed by this review.

“Polling district”. This is the area created by the division of the constituency or local government electoral area, such as a ward. The District Council is responsible for deciding the boundaries of polling districts. In England, each parish must be a separate polling district, although larger parishes can be divided into two or more districts. A parish must not be in a polling district which has a part of different parish within it, or any un-parished part of the local authority area within it.

“Polling place”. This is the building or area in which the Returning Officer will locate polling stations.

“Polling station”. This is the actual area where the process of voting takes place. This must be located within the polling place and designated for the particular polling district. This function of identifying a polling station is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

7.3 As a result of the consultation process the Council has received the following representations:

- Ipstones Parish Council – existing polling places are suitable, happy with the current arrangements.
- Dane Ward Councillor– happy with current arrangements.
- Grindon Parish Council – happy with current arrangement as the building has been refurbished with improved access and improved accessible toilet facilities.
- Waterhouses Parish Council – happy with current arrangements.
- Leek East Ward Councillor – comments received on warding arrangements.
- Comment received regarding the use of the Old Grammar School (Scout Hall) Clerk Bank Leek and parking arrangements, with a suggested alternative of The Fowlowe, Stockwell Street, Leek. Electoral Services have investigated this suggestion, unfortunately the room is not available for use when required.
- Comments received regarding the use of William Amory Primary School when other suitable community buildings available. Electoral Services have investigated The Methodist Church Hall, Uttoxeter Road, St Peter’s Church Hall, Blythe Bridge Library and Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook Village Hall as suitable alternative venues.
- Comments received regarding the use of South Moorlands Leisure

Centre and the extreme noise coming from the gym and spinning classes during the day and evening. Thorley Drive pavilion has been investigated as a suitable alternative venue.

- Comments received regarding access and parking arrangements from Bishop Rawle School, Painsley Sixth Form College, Brough Park Leisure Centre and Werrington Primary School have all been investigated with the issues raised resolved.

7.4 Analysis of all the representations received, together with details of the recommendations following the analysis, are contained in Appendices A and B attached to the report. Where changes are proposed to the current arrangements, details of those changes are provided in Appendix B and form the basis of the proposed resolution of the Committee at 2.3 above.