



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL – 24 JANUARY 2024
Subject	POLLING DISTRICT REIEW
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Joe Harris, Leader of the Council joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive Email: Robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Sarah Dalby, Electoral Services Manager Email: sarah.dalby@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the outcome of the review of polling districts and places/stations undertaken within the District.
Annexes	Annex A - Schedule of polling districts and stations Annex B - Consultation responses Annex C – New polling districts for Watermoor
Recommendation(s)	That Full Council resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places/stations set out in the Annex A.2. Approve the proposed changes to polling stations as set out in the annexe B and Annex C.3. Delegate authority to the Returning Officer to make any further changes as necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections.4. Authorise the Electoral Registration Officer to make any changes as are necessary to the Register of Electors.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a statutory requirement to conduct a polling district/places review
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/	Consultation with District and County Councillors, Parish & Town



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Consultation	Councils and the MP was carried out during November. The review was also published on the Council's website.
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A Polling District Review has been conducted to consider the polling district and polling stations for the District.
- 1.2 This report sets out the process of the Review for Members to agree.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 193 and the Electoral Administration Act 2006, local authorities are required to undertake a regular (five-yearly) review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations within their area. The review is conducted in accordance with Electoral Commission guidance.
- 2.2 The aims of a review are as follows:
 - to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable;
 - to ensure that every polling place is accessible to voters with additional needs.
- 2.3 The review does not consider Parliamentary Constituency, County Division, District Ward or Town/Parish Council boundaries. It does consider the polling districts which make up these areas.
- 2.4 The review recommends a polling district structure and allocation of polling places and polling stations.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 In accordance with the statute, every parliamentary constituency must be divided into polling districts; and for each polling district there must be a designated “polling place” and “polling station”
- 3.2 **A polling district** is a geographical area and in England each parish is to be a separate polling district. This means that a parish must not be in a polling district which has a part of a different parish within it unless special circumstances apply. Those special circumstances could arise if, for example, the parish has only a small number of electors and it is not practicable for the parish to be its own polling district. Within Cotswold District, we have traditionally used a Parish or Parish Ward area as the polling district.
- 3.3 **A polling place** is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district. It is considered that polling places should always be defined more specifically than simply the polling district - for example, by designating the name of the polling place (normally a particular building or area and its environs).



3.4 A **polling station** is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation documents were sent out to the MP, County and District Councillors and Town/Parish Councils and Meetings within the District.

4.2 The documentation provided details of the current arrangements and comments were invited on whether any changes were considered necessary.

4.3 The responses received are included on Annex A.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The current polling districts are generally fit for purpose as in the main they follow parish and parish ward boundaries. However, it is recommended that the Watermoor polling district be split into two to allow for an additional polling station location to be sited.

5.2 The following changes are recommended to polling places/stations:

- Baunton – allocate St Mary Magdalene Church, Baunton as the polling place and station for Baunton Parish
- Retain Quenington Village Hall as the polling station for Coln St Aldwyns and review once the redevelopment of the Mill site in Coln St Aldwyns is complete
- Consider options for additional information to be sent to electors in New Mills ward to encourage use of walking routes to Watermoor School
- Retain 2 locations and 3 polling stations in Tetbury and consider a Community Governance Review to ward the Town Council area for future elections
- A polling station in the newly created polling district in Watermoor will be located in the Meadow Way area. Two potential sites have been identified, but at the time of writing, no final arrangement has been agreed. It is therefore recommended that the polling district be split and the Returning Officer continue to seek an alternative location (annex C)
- Consultation on a proposal to relocate the polling station in Driffield from the Harnhill Centre to Ampney Crucis Village Hall was considered as part of the process. The responses from the Parish Council and district and County Councillor Lisa Spivey are included in Annex A.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Any costs arising from additional polling stations are expected to be minimal and will be met from existing budgets.



7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None, other than set out elsewhere in the report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 There is no significant risk in relation to this report, however if Members do not agree the Polling District/Station schedule, they will be in breach of the requirement to do so.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 The recommendations are not expected to impact any groups with protected characteristics.

9.2 Polling station locations are inspected regularly to ensure they meet accessibility requirements for voters.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)