

Review of Polling District and Polling Places 2019

Guidance Note

Introduction

The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty to divide the Borough into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district. There is a duty to keep these polling arrangements under review.

Newcastle Borough Council is looking for feedback on any aspect of polling districts and / or polling places currently used and invite representation and comments from interested persons.

Timetable of Review:

Publication of Notice and consultation document	Monday 29 July 2019
Closing date for representations	Thursday 19 September 2019
Consideration of all representations	Friday 20 September 2019 – Friday 4 October 2019
Publication of recommendations in the Council agenda	Monday 28 October 2019
Submit final report (with any recommendations) to Full Council	Wednesday 20 November 2019
Register of Elector published	Sunday 1 December 2019

What is:-

A Polling District - the geographical sub-division of an electoral ward (ie polling district letters BAA, BAB, BAC etc).

A Polling Place - the building or area in which a polling station is located

A Polling Station - the room or area where voting takes place

What is being reviewed?

The Acting Returning Officer must consider the suitability of all existing and any proposed polling places ensuring that:-

- all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

- so far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to all electors, also having regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

In an ideal world there would be a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for the electors in the area. In practice, however, this is not always the case and there may be little choice available especially in rural areas. If it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal then every reasonable adjustment will be undertaken to provide access for all electors.

What is NOT being Reviewed?

- the boundaries of any Constituency, Ward, County or Parish
- the boundaries or names of any Local Authority, or the names of a Constituency, Ward, Parish etc.

Polling District and Polling Place Report

A report detailing all polling districts and places within the Borough is available for inspection at the Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL, Monday to Friday (8.30 am to 4.30 pm). Alternatively the document is available at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/your-council/elections-and-electoral-registration/review-of-polling-districts-and-polling-places-2019

Background Information

On polling day the Acting Returning Officer's staff who inspect and who work on the polling station will complete questionnaires and comment forms highlighting any problems, issues or possible concerns with polling stations being used. Comments from electors are also taken into consideration.

The Acting Returning Officer may adapt the polling station if the expected turnout for a particular election is likely to be high, for example a Parliamentary election, so some venues may become double polling stations or may be moved to a different / larger room.

Use of Schools

The Acting Returning Officer is entitled to use schools as polling stations. Where schools are used the Acting Returning Officer works with the Head Teacher to minimise any inconvenience and if possible to keep the school open. As much notice as possible is given, normally 12 months, to allow the Head Teacher to incorporate the election into the school diary.

Making Representations

Any registered elector within the Borough may make representations as to the suitability of a polling place or polling station taking into account the criteria of the review as stated above.

Please note that you should also suggest alternative venues if any of your comments relate to the unsuitability of a polling station.

Any comments or suggestions must be made in writing to the address below and must include your contact details. Representations are to be submitted by Thursday 19 September 2019.

All the representations that are received will be published at the Castle House (Council Offices) and be available for inspection. A final report will be available on the website once the review is completed and implemented.

Martin Hamilton
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