

## **Fact sheet**

### **1. General Information**

In accordance with the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Administration Act 2013, Stroud District Council may undertake a review of polling districts and places within the local authority outside of the 'compulsory review period' where consequential boundary reviews would or have directly impacted the current polling district and place arrangements currently in place.

This review is being undertaken as a result of the outcome of the review of County Council boundaries undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) which concluded in March 2024. Following this review we are required to review the Hamfallow Parish and Randwick and Westrip Parish wards and polling districts as a result of boundary changes which have been amended by the LGBCE. The draft Gloucestershire (Electoral Changes) Order 2024 was laid before parliament on the 25 July and is currently going through the objection period before the Order will become Law.

Following this review we are required to review the following Parishes due to changes made to the boundaries of the polling districts following the county boundary review:

- Hamfallow
- Randwick and Westrip

Our review will formally start on Friday 25 October 2024. This will commence the public consultation which will end on Sunday 1 December 2024. Once concluded, final proposals will be collated and then considered by Full Council on Thursday 19 December 2024. If agreed, the amendments will come into effect at the 1 May County Council Elections

### **2. Background**

The review must be undertaken to ensure that all electors have reasonable and suitable facilities for voting. When reviewing our polling districts, places and stations we will follow the following legislative guidelines;

- Each parish is to be a separate polling district unless special circumstances apply
- Council must designate a polling place for each polling district unless the situation of the polling station does not materially effect the convenience of the elector.
- The polling place must be in an area in the polling district unless special circumstances mean it is not possible to locate an appropriate place for polling, then it can be wholly or partly moved outside of the polling district.
- The polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.
- Seek to ensure that all electors in the local authority have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

- Seek to ensure that the polling place has appropriate accessibility for electors who are disabled so far as is reasonable.

### **3. Accessibility**

- A polling station should be within reasonable walking distance for the majority of the electors within the polling district the polling station is allocated to
- All polling stations should have access facilities for disabled electors, including wheelchair users.
- Where permanent facilities for access to the polling station are not possible, the Acting Returning Officer will make temporary provision by providing a portable ramp to the venue. However it must be remembered that on occasion these ramps can cause a hazard and therefore not always a practical solution.
- The following are identified as potential barriers in terms of access:
  - Stepped entrance
  - Narrow doorways and corridors
  - Lack of space within the polling station for mobility
  - Lack of space and secrecy for the elector to cast their vote or allow an elector with their companion to discuss the electors choice
  - Lack of low-level polling booths
  - Lack of chairs
  - Lack of clear signage
  - Inadequate lighting

The Elections Act 2022 requires the Returning Officer to provide and make reasonable provisions for electors in the polling station to allow the elector to be able to vote.

### **4. Practical Considerations**

- When selecting a polling station there are some basic criteria which need to be considered:
  - Geographically central for the majority of the electorate
  - Appropriate for democratic use
  - Appropriate health and safety arrangements
  - Have enough useable space
  - Have parking access
  - Have consideration for the welfare of the polling station staff (i.e. have toilets and food and water facilities)
  - Be cost effective.
- Considerations such as natural boundaries, railway lines, busy main roads etc need to be taken into account.
- Polling places should be 'logical' i.e. electors should not have to travel past another polling place to get to another.
- There are no legislative limits on the number of polling stations an authority can provide; however a polling station should not have more than 2,250 electors allocated to it.

## **5. What is not covered by the Review**

Neither the boundaries for parliamentary constituencies nor local ward boundaries will be part of this review.

## **6. Definitions**

### **Polling district**

A geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary Constituency. All electors within the polling district will attend the same voting place (unless a postal vote is in place).

### **Polling place**

The building or area in which a polling station will be provided by the Acting Returning Officer within the polling district (unless special circumstances mean this is not possible)

### **Polling station**

The room or area within the polling place where the process of voting takes place during an election e.g. a room in a village hall.

## **7. Contact**

If you have any questions or queries in relation to the review, please phone 01453 766321 or email [elections@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:elections@stroud.gov.uk).