



REPORT of CHIEF EXECUTIVE

to
COUNCIL
3 APRIL 2025

POLLING PLACES REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Local Authorities within the United Kingdom are required to undergo a compulsory review of all Polling Districts and Polling Places within the district. Following the close of the consultation period, Members are asked to consider the outcome of a recent review and to confirm the designation of polling districts and polling places in the Maldon District.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that no changes are made to the Polling Districts or Polling Places as outlined in **APPENDIX 1**;
- (ii) That where the current Polling District, Polling Place or Polling Station is considered or becomes unsuitable, Officers will provide provisional alternative options to Members for consideration. Members are to note, that these will need to be fully assessed for suitability by Officers prior to any changes being made.
- (iii) That Members confirm and approve the Polling Districts and Polling Places as detailed in **APPENDIX 1**.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Terminology

3.1.1 For the purposes of this report, it is important that Members understand the following terminology:

- Polling District – an area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors;
- Polling Place – the building or location where the polling station is situated;
- Polling Station – the room or area within the Polling Place where voting takes place.

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 advises of the timings for compulsory reviews of polling districts, polling places, and polling stations. The last

review was undertaken in 2019. The current compulsory review must be completed by 31 January 2025. The review was completed on time however there has been a slight delay in producing the report to the Council due to capacity challenges and a by-election.

- 3.2.2 The purpose of a review is to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, and that so far as is practicable, the polling places the Council is responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled. When considering the designation of a polling place, regard must be given to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.
- 3.2.3 As part of the 2012 review, each existing polling place was visited to carry out an access audit, taking account of the needs of people with disabilities, as set out in the criteria formulated by the Electoral Commission. A profile was prepared of each polling place, which included location maps and photo images of the actual polling stations, as well as other details such as dimensions, accessibility, mobile network availability and car parking. This information was further updated prior to the 2023 Elections, to ensure this information was correct, and could be displayed on the council Find my Polling Station lookup facility on the Council's website.
- 3.2.4 A large majority of our polling stations have adequate, if not, excellent facilities for electors with mobility problems. However, the Council does have some temporary access ramps that can be provided to locations where and when necessary, for polling days, to bring them up to a satisfactory standard. Where there are concerns that cannot be addressed with a ramp, and there are no suitable alternatives, staffing levels will be adjusted accordingly. Where issues are highlighted during any elections, polling station staff at the next election, will be made aware of those, so the issues can be managed accordingly.
- 3.2.5 The suitability and accessibility of polling stations continue to be monitored at election times both by the staff employed there and by Station Inspectors who will visit each station at least once during the election day.
- 3.2.6 Although the statutory requirement is to review the polling districts and places in relation to UK Parliamentary General Elections, the polling places and districts adopted pursuant to this review will be used at all future elections taking place within the district. It is worth noting that the Council is responsible for conducting the review and not the Electoral Registration Officer nor the Parliamentary Returning Officer.

3.3 **The Consultation Process**

- 3.3.1 The consultation began on 6 January 2025 and closed on 30 January 2025. The notice of review and schedule of existing and proposed polling districts and places were published on the Council's website on 6 January 2025. The schedule included comments from the Acting Returning Officer based on feedback from electors, members, and staff from all elections since 2023 in **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.3.2 The principles underlying the proposals were:
- To ensure that all electors in the district have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
 - To ensure that where possible, in line with Electoral Commission's guidelines, no more than 2,250 electors are allocated to each polling station.
 - To ensure that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
- 3.3.3 There were no proposed changes to either polling districts or polling places.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 It is recommended that no changes to the polling districts or polling places are made.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

5.1 Supporting our communities

5.1.1 The Polling District, Polling Place, and Polling Station Review supports our communities by enabling our electorate to carry out their democratic right to vote in the easiest and most convenient manner.

5.2 Investing in our District

5.2.1 This review ensure we are using local facilities within our district.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The purpose of the review is to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the Council enables all the electors in a polling district to have reasonable facilities for voting. The review is required to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, polling stations are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – This review supports the electorate of Maldon by ensuring they can carry out their democratic right to vote in the most accessible way possible.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – There is a statutory requirement to undertake regular reviews of polling districts and polling places.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – This review is required to look at the viability of polling districts, places and stations. Whilst it is acknowledged that there could be an increase in the cost of the venues hired, especially when a temporary polling station is required, this is not something to be considered as part of this review when determining any changes.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – It is acknowledged that during an election, Council staff will be required to support the needs of the democratic process.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – Further reviews may be required if there are changes to boundaries for parish, town or district Councils.

Background Papers:

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013;
Representation of the People Act 1983, Schedule 1A;
Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Guidance; The Electoral Commission.

Enquiries to:

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