



Report Date: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Topic: Polling District and Place Review 2023

Report by: Senior Electoral Services Officer

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Full Council approved the commencement of the Polling District and Polling Place Review and agreed to carry out a consultation.
- 1.2. The consultation has taken place and the purpose of this report sets out the proposal for the revised Polling District and Polling Places arrangements recommended as a result of the Council's responsibilities under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Governance Committee recommend to Full Council that the proposed Polling District and Polling Places within the North Devon Constituency as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 be adopted, in accordance with appendix A, Arrangements of Polling District and Places 2023 annexed to this report.

## 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To fulfil the Council's duty to review the UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places for North Devon.
- 3.2. This report updates Members with the changes:
  - Ebrington Arms – Due to the uncertainty and the ownership, we are unable to secure the premises as a polling station. As there are no known suitable alternative within the Polling District of Knowle, the best alternative would be to use the Church Hall at Christchurch in Braunton. This will be kept under review.
  - South Molton – South Molton has been split into two Polling Districts, Part 1 and Part 2. Due to the split, the Polling Districts have been re-lettered from DY to EJ.
  - St Johns Community Centre – We have been informed by Barnstaple Town Council that the centre is currently closed to the public, due to a leaking roof. It is not known when the leak will be repaired and the centre will open. We are in communication with Barnstaple Town Council and monitoring the situation.
- 3.3 Public consultation took place between Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November and 30 responses were received the details of which are contained in appendix B

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. Polling district: the 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
- 4.2. Polling place: the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer
- 4.3. Polling station: the room or building where the poll takes place, chosen by the Returning Officer for the election and publicised on the Notice or Poll or the Notice of Situation of Polling Stations and communicated via poll card after the Notice of Election.

#### 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There were no resource implications

#### 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Any changes seek to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, the polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility of the needs of disabled person.
- 6.2. A provision in the Elections Act 2022 is to make it easier for disabled people to vote from May 2023. Disabled voters can choose anyone who is over 18 to accompany them in the polling station to help them vote. There is also a requirement for Returning Officers to take all reasonable steps to provide equipment to support disabled voters to vote independently and in secret at the polling station.

#### 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. No environmental impact from the changes within the report.

#### 8. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 8.1. Save as provided under paragraph 8.2 below, the decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annex 1, paragraph 5 (e) of the Constitution
- 8.2. One or more of the recommendations relate to a power which is reserved to Full Council pursuant to Article 4.5.19 and must be referred here for a decision.

## 9. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- 10.1 The public consultation concluded on the 10 November 2023, 30 responses were received and a summary of the responses is attached (appendix 2).

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

## 11. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

- Head of Governance
- Returning Officer