

## Review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations

<b>Committee:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	22 January 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Law and Governance
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Resources and Transformation

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### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Council is requested to note the outcome of the compulsory review of UK Parliamentary and local authority polling districts, polling places and polling stations.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the review process be noted, and the proposals detailed at **Appendix 1** to the report be approved.
- 2.2 That the review investigations should continue with a view to implementing any further possible changes to polling places and polling stations in advance of the next scheduled elections on 1 May 2025.
- 2.3 That delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive in his capacity as (Acting) Returning Officer to approve changes to polling places and polling stations, as may be required, in between formal reviews.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.4 To comply with the duty to undertake a formal review of polling districts and places every 5 years.

### 3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council, through the (Acting) Returning Officer (Deputy Chief Executive), is required to undertake periodic compulsory reviews of polling districts and polling places for both Parliamentary and local authority elections. Cannock Chase is fortunate that the Parliamentary Constituency and local authority District boundaries are coterminous enabling the reviews to be combined.
- 3.2 In particular, the Council is required to undertake a compulsory review of UK parliamentary and local authority polling districts, polling places and polling stations on a 5-year cycle. The governing legislation provides for a 15-month window between 1 October 2023 to 31 January 2025 during which the review must be commenced and concluded.
- 3.3 The approach to the review has been to attempt to address both current needs while being mindful of future electoral requirements. While the formal periodic review is intended primarily in respect of Parliamentary election polling places, Cannock Chase District Council uses the same polling places at local elections. As local elections (District Council; County Council or Parish Councils), are held

every year, the Council already reviews its polling place provision on an annual basis.

- 3.4 By law, for the purpose of taking the polling in England and Wales, the (Acting) Returning Officer is entitled to use, free of charge, schools maintained or assisted by a local authority. This also applies to those schools that receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament, including academies and free schools.
- 3.5 The County Council sends annual reminders to Head teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies of the (Acting) Returning Officers' rights in this regard. While this is generally not popular with Head teachers, provision exists for them to use INSET days in order to minimise the impact of the elections, which normally fall on the first Thursday in May. Therefore, this should be allowed for when planning the academic year. However, there is no automatic requirement to close schools, and not all feel the need to do so; that is a decision for the individual Heads.
- 3.6 The Deputy Chief Executive / (Acting) Returning Officer is mindful of the impact that using school premises can have in some instances and has requested that their use be given particular attention as part of the review process. However, there is a shortage of suitable alternative facilities in the District and, as a result, schools premises remain one of the default locations. It should be noted that using alternative venues is also likely to result in additional costs to the Council. Nonetheless, the Electoral Services team continues to work with schools to try to minimise any inconvenience.
- 3.7 The review process included a public consultation stage, during which representations from elected members and other interested parties were received and considered. The Council will continue to review the suitability of its polling places outside of the compulsory review process, with the Deputy Chief Executive having delegated authority to make any changes deemed necessary in between formal reviews.

## **4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council through its democratic process supports all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

## **5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 The Electoral Administration Act, 2006 (EAA 2006), introduced a duty on all local authorities to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act, 2013 (ERAA 2013), amended this requirement to bring the reviews in line with revised five-year UK Parliamentary terms, with the reviews required to be completed within the period of 15 months beginning from 1 October, 2023, and ending 31 January, 2025.
- 5.2 Reviews of polling districts and polling places for local government elections are prescribed under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1983 (RPA 1983). As Cannock Chase has the benefit of a coterminous Parliamentary Constituency and local authority District boundary, the two reviews are able to be conducted simultaneously.

### 5.3 Definitions

- A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of an electoral area such as a UK Parliamentary constituency, an electoral division; or a District ward, into smaller parts.
- A polling place is the particular building or area in which a polling station will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- A polling station is a room or area within the polling place where voting takes place.

While polling districts and polling places are determined by Council as part of the review, polling stations are chosen by the (Acting) Returning Officer and may be redesignated within the polling place without the need for further review.

Practically, the majority of people are only concerned about the location and suitability of polling stations.

### 5.4 Formal Review Process

There is a prescribed process for conducting the review, which was previously reported to Council, along with a summary of the process. Briefly, the process is as follows:

The Council must give notice of the holding of a review (Completed). The notice must be displayed at the local authority's office and in at least one conspicuous place within the authority, and published on the local authority website. Copies of the notice were also sent to interested parties, including elected representatives (Councillors, MP, etc.), political parties, disability groups and other stakeholders to invite comments. A press release was also issued, and social media feeds used to draw attention to the review and the process.

A copy of the Notice including the timetable for the process is included at Appendix 2 to the report.

- **Consultation (Completed)**

The consultation stage sought representations and comments on the existing and proposed arrangements for polling districts, if applicable, polling places and polling stations. There are two aspects of this stage: (i) A compulsory submission from the (Acting) Returning Officer of the UK Parliamentary constituency. (ii) Submissions from electors and other interested persons and bodies, including elected representatives and those with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for disabled people. In order to maximise feedback, questionnaires were also placed in polling stations inviting comments from electors attending the UK Parliamentary elections on 4 July 2024.

- **The (Acting) Returning Officer's submission (Completed)**

The (Acting) Returning Officer's submission must comment on both the existing polling stations and the polling stations that would likely be used based on any proposed polling places. This is, effectively, the (Acting) Returning Officer's interim recommendations, which were published on the Council's website and further responses invited in accordance with the

published timetable. A small number of additional comments were received as a result.

- **Conclusion (This stage)**

After considering all of the representations, the (Acting) Returning Officer prepares recommendations on the most appropriate polling districts / places / stations, which must be approved by Council. Any alteration is effective on the date on which the Electoral Registration Officer publishes a notice stating that the alterations have been made. This should be at the same time as the register is revised or a notice of alteration published, as appropriate. As no changes to polling districts are recommended, this is not relevant in this instance.

- **Publishing the conclusions of the review**

Once the Council has agreed the proposals, details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public, as per the original notice of review. While it is important that steps are taken to make affected electors aware of any changes to the place they must attend to vote, it is sufficient to highlight any changes on the poll card for the next election they are entitled to vote at.

A summary of the conclusions and recommendations from the review is attached as Appendix 1.

The Council holds scheduled elections every year. The Council elects 'by thirds,' so it has a local election in three out of every four years. The fourth year ('fallow' year) is when County Council elections take place. Parish Council elections also take place on a four yearly cycle and are combined with local elections in the second year of the Council cycle. In the third year of the cycle, elections for the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (Staffordshire PFCC), are combined with local elections. As a result, there is an ongoing cycle of review across the duration of every electoral event. Consideration is also given to feedback from polling station staff and others, including members of the public, after every election.

- 5.5 The (Acting) Returning Officer is mindful of a number of new and ongoing residential developments across the district. However, no provision has been made at this stage in terms of revisions to polling districts to account for the potential increased electorates. In the short term, these matters can be addressed, if required, by the (Acting) Returning Officer under delegated powers, with local Ward Councillors being consulted, as appropriate.
- 5.6 As a result of the initial consultation and subsequent to the publication of the (Acting) Returning Officer's initial recommendations, suggestions for alternative venues were made in respect of 22 of the 49 polling places, covering 67 polling stations.

5.7 As a result of the review, it is proposed to recommend a permanent change to:

District Ward	Existing Polling Station	Proposed Polling Station
Brereton and Ravenhill	Pear Tree WMC (BA6)	Church of the Good Shepherd
	Chase View CP School (BA7)	Church of the Good Shepherd
Cannock Longford and Bridgtown	Longford Social Club (CL3)	St Stephens Church Hall
	The Scout Hut off The Willows (CL5)	Cannock Library
Cannock Park and Old Fallow	St Stephens Church Hall (CP1)	St Lukes Primary School
	Cannock Community Fire Station (CP3)	Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road
Chadsmoor	Moorhill CP School (portable) (CR4)	To use room in the School and not portable
Hawks Green with Rumer Hill	Civic Centre (HA6)	Salvation Army Hall
	Civic Centre (HA5)	Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road
Hednesford Green Heath	Pye Green Academy	To use another room in the school instead of the nursery
Hednesford Pye Green	Pye Green Community Centre (HZ3)	Green Heath Working Mens Club, Blewitt Street
	Portable Polling Station Bell and Bottle (HZ4)	Portable Polling Station Brindley Heath

## 6 Implications

### 6.1 Financial

None.

### 6.2 Legal

The review is a statutory requirement as detailed in the report.

### 6.3 Human Resources

None

### 6.4 Risk Management

There is a small risk of voters being discouraged from voting if they consider polling places and polling stations to be inappropriate, though they do, of course, have the option of a postal vote rather than voting in person. This review seeks

to mitigate this risk by ensuring that the venues are conveniently located and fit for purpose.

## **6.6 Equalities and Diversity**

Equality and diversity considerations are embedded within the requirements of the review.

## **6.7 Climate Change**

None

## **7 Appendices**

Appendix 1: (Acting) Returning Officer's Summary Report – Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Appendix 2: Notice of Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places, including timetable for process

## **8 Previous Consideration**

None

## **9 Background Papers**

[Section 31 Representation of the People Act, 1983](#) (RPA 1983)

[The Electoral Administration Act, 2006](#) (EAA 2006)

[The Electoral Registration and Administration Act, 2013](#) (ERAA 2013)

[The Electoral Commission Guidance: Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations](#)

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**Ward Interest:** All

**Report Track:** Council: 22/01/25

**Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Station Review 2024**  
**(Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act, 1983; and Electoral Administration Act, 2006, as amended by the**  
**Electoral Registration and Administration Act, 2013)**

The (Acting) Returning Officer for the Cannock Chase Parliamentary Constituency and the Cannock Chase District Council has undertaken a review in accordance with the above legislation. This has included consultation with, amongst others: elected representatives; disability groups; other stakeholders; and members of the public. Comments received as part of the initial consultation and, subsequently, following publication of his initial recommendations have been considered by the (Acting) Returning Officer and his final recommendations are detailed below.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that polling stations are accessible and convenient to all electors; unfortunately, premises that are entirely suitable in every regard are not always available in the required area, and a location that is 'generally satisfactory' may need to suffice instead. Nonetheless, the situation is monitored on an ongoing basis and, in the event that better alternative facilities become available, the (Acting) Returning Officer will consider and determine their suitability for future use.

## Brereton and Ravenhill

Poll. District	Current Polling Place / Polling Station	Comments (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)	Recommendation
BA1 BA2	Brereton Community Library	1 comment received - happy to use Brereton Community Library	None suggested	No changes proposed
BA3	Hob Hill School	No comments received	None suggested	No changes proposed
BA4	Brereton Community Hub	No comments received	None suggested	No changes proposed
BA5	St Joseph's School, Newman Grove	No comments received	None suggested	No changes proposed
BA6	Pear Tree W.M.C. Concert Room	No comments received	Church of the Good Shepherd. By combining BA6 and BA7 this would save using a school and the location is quite central to both polling districts.	To use Church of the Good Shepherd as the polling place for polling districts BA6 and BA7.
BA7	Chase View C P School	No comments received	Church of the Good Shepherd. By combining BA6 and BA7 this would save using a school and the location is quite central to both polling districts.	To use Church of the Good Shepherd as the polling place for polling districts BA6 and BA7



## Cannock Longford and Bridgtown

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
CL1	Bethel Methodist Church	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CL2	St Barnabas Church Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CL3	Longford Social Club	1 comment received - venue may not be available in the future	St Stephens Church Hall is more central to the polling district	To use St Stephens Church Hall as the polling place for polling district CL3
CL4	Salvation Army Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CL5	The Scout Hut, off The Willows	3 comments received - not easy to find, poor state of access road, insufficient lighting.	Cannock Library St Lukes church hall Both venues have been visited.	Cannock Library is within the polling district and is happy to accommodate a polling station.

## Cannock Park and Old Fallow

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
CP1	St. Stephen's Church Hall	2 comments received - too far from polling district	St Lukes Primary School Portacabin at Shaol Hill	To use St Lukes Primary School as the polling place for polling district CP1
CP2	Cannock Chase High School	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CP3	Cannock Community Fire Station	1 comment received - close proximity of polling station with Chase High School can these be combined	Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road  Chase High School - unable to provide enough space to accommodate a double polling station.	To use Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road as the polling place for polling district CP3
CP4	Cardinal Griffin Catholic College	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CP5	Bevan Lee Community Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

## Chadsmoor

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
CR1	Chadsmoor Methodist Church	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CR2	Highfields Centre	No comments received	We are aware that this venue may not be available in the future however we have been assured that we can use it for the 2025 elections	No changes proposed. Should be available for the elections in 2025. Keep under review to find alternative venue when Highfields Centre no longer available.
CR3	St. Aidan's Church Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
CR4	Moorhill C.P. School (portable)	No comments received	Chase Baptist Church	To ask Moorhill CP School if we can use a room in the school instead of a portacabin.
CR5	West Chadsmoor Family Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

## Etching Hill and The Heath

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
ET1 ET6	Forest Hills Primary School	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
ET2 ET3	The Church of the Holy Spirit	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
ET4 ET5	Slitting Mill Victory Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
ET7	The Chase Pub, Hagley Road	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

## Hawks Green with Rumer Hill

Poll. District	Current Polling Place/Polling Station	Comments (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)	Recommendation
HA1 HA2 HA3 HA4	Hayes Green Community Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HA5 HA6	Civic Centre, Beecroft Road	2 comments received - too far from polling district	Salvation Army Hall Fire Station Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road	There are county boundary changes to this polling district therefore, it is recommended that HA5 to go to Welcome WMC Heath Gap Road and HA6 to go to the Salvation Army Hall

## Heath Hayes and Wimblebury

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
HE1	Heath Hayes Academy	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HE2 HE6	Five Ways J M School	1 comment received - takes children out of school	Welcome Club Heath Hayes Library Both venues are used for other polling stations	No changes proposed
HE3 HE4	Heath Hayes Community Library	1 comment received - not enough parking, room not big enough, suitable for wheelchairs.	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed	No changes proposed
HE5	Wimblebury Community Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

## Hednesford Green Heath

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
HF1 HF2	Staffordshire University Academy	1 comment received - polling station suitable with adequate parking	Poppyfields Primary School	No changes proposed
HF3	Pye Green Academy	2 comments received - takes children out of school, room not suitable for double polling station	5's Pavillion Green Heath Working Mens Club (this is being used for a different area)	To ask the school if there is a different room that can be used as a polling station

## Hednesford Hills and Rawsley

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
HR1	St Peter's Church Hall	1 comment received - Church Hall fits criteria as a polling station	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HR2	St Joseph's RC School	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HR3	Portable Polling Station Beaudesert View	No comments received	Complaints received at the elections regarding siting of the portable.	Move siting of portable polling station to St Michaels Drive
HR4	Cannock Wood and Gentleshaw Village Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HR5	Hazel Slade Primary Academy	1 comment received - Do not believe schools should be used as polling stations.	Portacabin -no suggested area to site this	No changes proposed
HR6	Prospect Village Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed



## Hednesford Pye Green

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
HZ1 HZ2 HZ7	The Aquarius Ballroom (Pisces Suite)	No comment received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
HZ3 HZ5	Pye Green Community Centre	1 comment received - too far to get to polling station and would therefore dissuade people from voting	Hednesford Library The Aquarius Ballroom Green Heath Working Mens Club	To use Green Heath Working Mens Club as the polling place for polling district HZ3 and Pye Green Community Centre the polling place for polling district HZ5
HZ4	Portable Polling Station Bell and Bottle	1 comment received -suggest combining with Portable at Brindley Heath	Suggestion to combine the polling place from Portable Polling Brindley Heath Car Park to Portable Polling Station Bell and Bottle	Brindley Heath Car Park is a larger more accessible area than the Bell and Bottle therefore it is recommended to use Portable Polling Station Brindley Heath Car Park as the polling place for polling district HZ4 and HZ6
HZ6	Portable Polling Station Brindley Heath Car Park	1 comment received - suggest combining with portable at Bell and Bottle	As above	No changes proposed (combine with HZ4)

## Norton Canes

Poll. District	Current Polling Place / Polling Station	Comments (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)	Recommendation
NR1	Jerome C P School	1 comment received - supports using St James Church although there is no Church Hall	St James Church - this has been visited and is not suitable to use as a polling station	No changes proposed
NR2	Norton Canes Methodist Church Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
NR3	Norton Canes Community Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

## Western Springs

<b>Poll. District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place / Polling Station</b>	<b>Comments</b> (summary of comments received. Premises are, otherwise, considered to be satisfactory for elections purposes)	<b>Alternative Venue(s) Suggest (if any)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
WE1 WE3	St Paul's Church Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
WE2 WE4	Rugeley Rose Theatre and Community Hall	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed
WE5	Rugeley Leisure Centre	No comments received	No accessibility issues. No changes proposed.	No changes proposed

### Notice of Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review 2024

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 that Cannock Chase District Council (the Council) is to carry out a review of its polling districts and polling places.

Relevant information and mapping regarding the current arrangements and proposals for changes can be found on the Council's website.

The (Acting) Returning Officer (ARO) for the Parliamentary constituency will comment on the proposals. Those representations will be published on the Council's website and will be available for inspection at Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG

Electors within the Council area or within a UK Parliamentary constituency which has any part in the authority may make a representation. We invite comments from all electors regarding the convenience of voting at polling stations currently used for elections and would welcome suggestions for alternative sites.

The Council would also welcome the views of all residents, particularly disabled residents, or any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability, on the proposals, ARO's representations or any other related matters.

Anybody making representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places.

Comments and representations may be submitted as follows:

<b>By completing the online feedback form</b>	<a href="https://customers.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PollingReview2024">https://customers.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/PollingReview2024</a>
<b>By email</b>	<a href="mailto:electionsoffice@cannockchasedc.gov.uk">electionsoffice@cannockchasedc.gov.uk</a>
<b>By post</b>	Electoral Registration Officer Cannock Chase District Council Beecroft Road Cannock WS11 1BG

All representations must be made by no later than 4 November 2024

#### Timetable

Date	Review Stage
27 September 2024	Formal notice of review
27 September 2024	Publication of existing polling station locations
27 September 2024	Publication of (Acting) Returning Officer's comments
27 September 2024	Commencement of public consultation period
4 November 2024	End of public consultation period
22 January 2025	Consideration of proposed changes by Full Council
	Publication of correspondence following the implementation of changes

The outcome of the review will be published by the Council in January 2025 and will be available for inspection on the Council's website and Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.

Anybody making representations should be aware that, upon completion of the review, all correspondence and representations received must, by law, also be published.

Dated: 27 September 2024  
**Chris Forrester**  
Electoral Registration Officer  
Cannock Chase District Council