

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Local Authorities must comply with a number of legislative requirements regarding the location and accessibility of Polling Districts and Polling Places. The mandatory review process comprises a number of specified steps set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983, which include a public consultation.

The last review for Plymouth City Council was conducted in 2013. A full polling place and polling district review will now be conducted over the next 16 months.

The review will consider any representations from local residents and stakeholders in the city, including any issues regarding access to premises or facilities for persons with disabilities. Any elector can make their views known and the process for doing so will be publicised. In addition, the review will consider the impact of the next four years' worth of planned residential developments on existing electoral arrangements.

In encouraging views, it is of course the case that the availability of suitable polling places is the key determining factor in the makeup of polling districts. Therefore, in asking for comments, we will request that alternative proposals should include suggestions for polling station locations.

It is the Returning Officer's role to select the polling stations. It will be Full Council which will make the decisions on any proposed changes to polling districts or polling places. The final scheme for polling arrangements will be adopted by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Council's constitution.

The polling districts, polling places and polling stations finally decided on will be used for the May 2020 local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Scope of the review

Plymouth is divided into 116 polling districts each associated with one of 114 polling stations (two of those polling stations are double). Polling districts, geographic subdivisions of each ward, as well as polling stations for each of those districts are within the scope of this review. The review is considering the continued suitability of the existing arrangements and, when necessary, will make proposals for:

- The creation or removal of districts,
- "Change" or "no change" to the boundaries between districts,
- "Change" or "no change" to the referencing of those districts,
- "Change" or "no change" to the polling stations within those districts.

Not in scope

City ward boundaries and parliamentary constituency boundaries are not in scope of this review. The legislation requires that ward boundaries are reviewed by the Electoral Commission, not by Local

Authorities themselves. We do not have a mandate to suggest alterations to the boundaries between the wards.

The review will not be able to consider comments regarding local authority boundaries, neighbouring parliamentary constituencies, the names of local authorities or other electoral areas within or bordering Plymouth City.

Glossary of terms

Polling District - A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area.

Polling Place - A polling place is the area in which the Returning Officer selects the polling station. In Plymouth, polling places represent the same area as the polling district to allow a greater degree of flexibility in deciding where a polling station should be located.

Polling Station - The polling station is the room or building where the poll takes place.

Accessing information

The report presents information for each ward of the city. These are presented in alphabetical order and are listed in a contents table on page 3.

In order to illustrate those recommendations for each ward, maps of the existing arrangements as well as maps of our proposed arrangements are available on our polling station page:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/votingandelections/pollingdistrictreview2018>

In the polling district information tables provided for each ward, the word “Electorate” refers to the total number of registered voters in the district, as of August 2018.

In the polling station information tables provided for each ward, the expression “Polling Station Electorate” refers to the total number of registered voters in the district who have opted to attend a polling station to vote, as of August 2018. This figure excludes electors from the district who may have opted to vote by other means. This figure informs us of the maximum number of electors who may attend the polling station on polling day.

SOUTHWAY WARD**Existing Polling Districts**

Polling district	Polling Station	Electorate¹	Recommendations
FA	Mary Dean Primary School	679	Merger with district FA
FAB	Mary Dean Primary School	992	Merger with district FAB
FB	Mobile Unit at Dunnet Road	1,317	No change
FC	Southway Youth Centre	1,165	No change
FD	Beechwood Primary School	1,380	No change
FE	Widewell Primary School	1,451	Changes to boundaries with district FF
FF	Church of the Holy Spirit	2,187	Changes to boundaries with district FE
FG	Mobile Unit at Hessary Drive ³	808	No change

Existing Polling Stations

Polling district	Polling Station	Polling station electorate²	Disabled access	Recommendations
FA	Mary Dean Primary School	522	Yes – temporary ramp	No change
FAB	Mary Dean Primary School	766	Yes – temporary ramp	No change
FB	Mobile Unit at Dunnet Road	1,005	Yes ³	No change
FC	Southway Youth Centre	968	Yes	No change
FD	Beechwood Primary School	1,074	Yes	No change
FE	Widewell Primary School	1,155	Yes	No change
FF	Church of the Holy Spirit	1,727	Yes	No change
FG	Mobile Unit at Hessary Drive	683	Yes ³	No change

¹ Total number of registered electors in the district.

² Number of registered electors in the district who have opted to vote at a polling station.

³ Although mobile polling stations are suitably equipped to enable access for all voters (ramps and handrails for disabled access) there are still ongoing concerns due to inherent characteristics of mobile units, such as their narrow entrance and limited internal area.

Recommendations

This review investigates opportunities to remove mobile polling stations whenever circumstances allow. However, this must be balanced against the necessity to provide accessible and convenient polling stations that meet the specific needs of each ward.

Mobile Unit at Dunnet Road in district FB – no change

In this instance, no suitable alternative could be identified. The area is residential only, with no suitable alternative polling station. Residential development are taking place in the district on the site of the old Oakwood primary school, and the number of electors is anticipated to grow. The review therefore does not recommend a change unless suitable alternative polling arrangements are put forward during the consultation.

Mobile Unit at Hessary Drive – FG – no change

District FG is the smallest in the ward with 808 electors, but it is also geographically isolated from the rest of the ward, due to the topography of the area. The only access to the area is via a dual carriage way, and there are few practicable walkways to connect this north-eastern district to others. It is therefore not practicable to suggest a merger with a neighbouring district. No suitable alternative polling stations were identified in the area or its vicinity. The review therefore does not recommend a change unless suitable alternative polling arrangements are put forward during the consultation.

Districts FA and FAB - Merger of the two districts

The number of electors in each district is currently lower than the numbers recommended by good practice. Residents from both districts vote at the same polling station at Mary Dean Primary School.

Recommendation: Merge district FA and FAB. Merge the two polling stations into one at Mary Dean Primary School.

District FF and District FE – Changes to district boundaries

District FF is the largest district in the ward, and its electorate is anticipated to grow in the next five years. It is adjacent to district FE which has a much smaller electorate. In addition, electors in the east and south east of district FF may have equivalent, or better access to the polling station for district FE, Widewell Primary School.

Redrawing the district boundaries between district FF and district FE will ensure that the electorate is more evenly distributed across both districts. This will create capacity in district FF to sustain growth in the next five years.

The review proposes changes to the district boundary between FF and FE. Other boundaries will not be affected.

The district boundary along the south-east of Southway Drive would be moved. The south-east and east portion of the current district FF could merge with district FE. The south-east boundary of district FF would now run along the watercourse at the back of Barningham Gardens.

Residents of the following streets, known as Birdcage Farm, would now vote at Widewell Primary School:

- Barningham Gardens,
- Corsham Close,
- Davenham Close,
- Barndale Crescent and all streets adjacent to Barndale Crescent.

Residents of the west side of Tavistock Road, up to Widewell Lane, including residents of Boundary Place will now join district FE and vote at Widewell Primary School.

Residents of Frewin Gardens and Butler Close would remain in district FF and continue to vote at the Church of the Holy Spirit.

Summary of proposed new Polling Districts and Polling Stations

New Polling district	New Polling Station	Address	Estimated Electorate¹	Estimated Polling station electorate²
FA	Mary Dean Primary School	Mary Dean Avenue, PL5 4LS	1,671	1,288
FB	Mobile Unit at Dunnet Road	Near junction with Tamerton Foliot Road, PL6 6LR	1,317	1,005
FC	Southway Youth Centre	Hendwell Close, PL6 6TB	1,165	968
FD	Beechwood Primary School	Rockfield Avenue, PL6 6DX	1,380	1,074
FE	Widewell Primary School	Lulworth Drive, PL6 7ER	2,154	1,676
FF	Church of the Holy Spirit	Clifford Road, PL6 6DJ	1,479	1,192
FG	Mobile Unit at Hessary Drive	Hessary Drive, PL6 7DG	808	683

¹ Total number of registered electors in the district.

² Number of registered electors in the district who have opted to vote at a polling station.