

**Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023
8 November 2023**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Council to determine the outcome of the review of polling districts and polling places in the Parliamentary Constituencies of Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Fleetwood, to be Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Wyre from the next UK Parliamentary General Election.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Council approves the amendments to polling districts and polling places for the parliamentary constituencies in the Lancaster City Council area as outlined in appendix A of this report, or, if any changes are made, that reasons are given for the decision(s).
- (2) That Council authorises the publication of the prescribed statutory information about the outcome of the review.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to carry out and complete a review of polling district and polling places between 01 October 2013 and 31 January 2015, and then in the period of 16 months beginning with 01 October every fifth year after that.

1.2 For clarification a “**polling district**” is defined as the geographical area created by sub-dividing a constituency/ward; a “**polling place**” is defined as a designated area for a polling district in which polling stations are located and a “**polling station**” is defined as the room in which polling takes place.

1.3 The Council must

- a) Seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances;
- b) Seek to ensure that so far as reasonable and practical the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those that are disabled and when considering designation of a polling place must have regard to the accessibility needs to disabled persons.

1.4 Following the completion of the parliamentary boundary review this year, new parliamentary constituencies will be adopted from the next UK parliamentary general election which will take place by 28 January 2025. At that stage the parliamentary constituencies become Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Wyre.

2.0 Details of Consultation

2.1 Formal consultation began with the publication of the notice of review on 2 October 2023 with responses invited for submission by Friday 27 October 2023.

2.2 Two responses have been received and redacted versions of these are attached at appendix B.

2.3 All responses have been considered and contact made with potential or existing polling places to ascertain whether these can provide workable solutions for electors. A list of current polling place, current electorate and a response to any comments received is included at Appendix A.

2.4 One of the responses raised concerns about the use of schools for polling stations. It is considered that the Council should continue to use schools for polling stations. Schools, particularly primary schools, lie at the centre of the communities they serve, and are therefore popular with both the Returning Officer and voters as venues for polling stations. Schools are usually more able than other premises to provide all the necessary facilities and are generally easily accessible to voters with disabilities. Schools are not commandeered or requisitioned for polling stations, it is a "duty" imposed by the Representation of the People Act 1983 (Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22) in recognition that school premises are funded, in part at least, by the Government.

2.5 The Electoral Commission recommends that a polling station should not have more than 2,250 electors allocated to it. A polling place may therefore exceed this number but sufficient polling stations must then be provided.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 Council must complete the review of its polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2025. In view of this timeframe, Council is asked to conclude the review to allow any amendments to be made in time for the publication of the revised register of electors on 01 December 2023. Any elections held after this date would be based on the new polling districts and polling places.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):
--

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to carry out and complete a review of polling district and polling places between 01 October 2013 and 31 January 2015, and then in the period of 16 months beginning with 01
--

October every fifth year after that.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with completing the review will be met from within the existing electoral registration budget. Implementing changes by 1 December 2023 enables plans to be put in place for the next UK parliamentary general election which will be held by 28 January 2025.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to make.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Functions relating to Elections are contained within Schedule 1 of the The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and as such are a matter for Full Council and not the Executive.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Contact Officer: Lisa Vines
Telephone: 01524 582070
Email: lvines@lancaster.gov.uk
Ref: