

## ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES OF THE ELECTORAL REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2018 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.**

**Present:**

Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Richard Clewer (Chairman), Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cllr Jonathon Seed (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Graham Wright

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**57 Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**58 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 2 October and 8 October 2018 were presented for consideration and it was,

**Resolved:**

**To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.**

**59 Declarations**

There were no declarations.

**60 Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**61 Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

**62 Polling District and Polling Place Review**

The Chairman introduced the item, and a presentation was received from Maggie Mulhall, Electoral Services, setting out the key elements and definitions of the Polling District and Place Review. The Chairman noted that the process would be technical and officer led.

Points raised included: the review was due by 31 January 2020, the review was only concerned with current boundaries as these were operational up to 2021, a

Polling District was a geographic space within an electoral area, a Polling Place was a building that housed polling stations, a Polling Station was where voting took place, not all Polling Districts had Polling Stations, the purpose of the Polling District and Place Review was to make voting facilities reasonably practical and ensured they were Disability Discrimination Act compliant, and that the initial stage of the review was to run to May 2019 whilst the formal stage was to run to December 2019.

The Committee then discussed the forthcoming review, noting that one purpose of the Polling District and Place Review was to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination legislation and a strong emphasis upon compliance was a distinguishing aspect of the next review. Conducting Polling District and Place Reviews following elections to Council was described as best practice by the Returning Officer.

The debate moved on to address practical questions of how the process could be streamlined, what information would be gathered and what the nature of consultation would be in this context.

Officers clarified that the formal stage that was to run to December 2019 ought to be less onerous than the initial stage that was to run to May 2019 and that these two separate processes were both required by statute.

The information sought from the consultation would be feedback from identified stakeholders. Key stakeholders would have an interest in access and disability and would have local knowledge of accessibility and how it is perceived locally. Stakeholders identified at this early stage were; Area Boards, disability groups and local political groupings.

The consultation would use the Authority's communications function and the consultation website, but would also be more loosely structured to capture local knowledge of individuals, potential venues, locations, access and transport. Site visits could form part of the information gathering exercise. The Committee was reminded that representations to the review would need to have a transparent audit trail.

Local knowledge was agreed to be critical to ensuring an acceptable balance of accessibility with travel requirements. It was stated that anomalies such as voters being required to travel past one polling station to vote at another would be minimised.

The engagement of Area Boards was felt to be key and Area Board Chairs would be encouraged to make the Polling District and Place Review subject of a Chairman's Announcement at their next meeting. A Councillor's Briefing Note would be written and circulated to all elected members. Community Engagement Managers would be canvassed on potential stakeholders to consult, and parish clerks would be provided with all relevant information.

It was also strongly emphasised that the Polling District and Place Review had no connection or relationship to the ongoing Electoral Review.

**Resolved:**

**The Committee approved being Officer-led in conducting the Polling District and Polling Place review.**

**The Committee noted the two stages of the polling district and polling place review; preliminary and formal reviews.**

**The Committee considered the approach to be taken for the preliminary and formal reviews.**

**The Committee determined the indicative timetable for the review.**

**63 Electoral Review**

An additional item was agreed for the Chairman to update the Committee on the Electoral Review. Following receipt of the council's submission representatives of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had visited the area and were due to report on their findings on 5 February 2019.

The naming of divisions was identified as outstanding work for the Electoral Committee from the Electoral Review. Once draft recommendations from the LGBCE had been published the deadline for further submissions would be 5 April 2019.

A workshop for the Committee had been arranged for 7 February 2019 with a public meeting on 12 February 2019. These dates would allow recommendations from Committee on how to respond to draft recommendations to be taken to Council on 26 February 2019.

Should division names or other matters not be resolved at Council on 26 February 2019, it was stated this would necessitate an extraordinary Council meeting to ensure the deadline for submission was met.

**Resolved:**

**To approve the approach and timetable for the naming of divisions.**

**64 Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 3.00 - 3.55 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Jim Brewster of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718242, e-mail [jim.brewster@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:jim.brewster@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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## Polling district and polling place review

## Background

- Council must undertake review between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020
- On **current** boundaries to facilitate by elections through until May 2021
- Preliminary stage
- Formal review stage

- Polling District
  - geographical subdivision of an electoral area
- Polling Place
  - Building or area in which polling stations are selected by the Returning Officer (RO)

- Polling station
  - area/room where the process of voting takes place





The purpose of a review is ensure that **all electors have reasonably practicable facilities for voting** and that **polling places are reasonably accessible to electors who are disabled.**

- Preliminary stage (January to May 2019)
  - Undertake a survey of polling stations
  - Assess the suitability of the polling districts considering future electorates
  - Identify anomalies

## Formal Review stage (June to December 2019)

- Publish notice of review
- Publish ARO representations
- Consultation period begins
- Committee to consider draft recommendations
- Council to consider recommendations
- Alterations to polling districts

## How can you help at this stage?

- Let us know if there are any issues with your polling station, place or district
- Contact the Electoral Services Team

[electionvenues@Wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:electionvenues@Wiltshire.gov.uk)

# Any Questions?

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