

Polling District and Places Review

Cabinet

Date: 18th October 2017

Author:	Leader of the Council Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	Blunsdon & Highworth, Chiseldon & Lawn, St Margaret & South Marston and St Andrews.
Parishes Affected:	Central Swindon South, Highworth, South Marston, Stratton St Margaret, and St Andrews.

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 A polling district review is carried out every 4 years in accordance with regulation. However, each year, a limited review is undertaken following on from the Council's elections, to look specifically at issues raised in connection with polling districts, places or stations. This review is necessary as the recent Community Governance Review created some anomalies between new parishes and existing polling district areas. In addition, it is good practice to keep the location of polling stations under constant review in case venues cease to be available. It also sets out specific issues that have been brought to the attention of the Returning Officer.
- 1.2 This report seeks Cabinet's authorisation to:
 - 1.2.1 Undertake a review of polling places within the wards of Blunsdon and Highworth.
 - 1.2.2 Create new polling districts within the Blunsdon & Highworth, Chiseldon & Lawn and St Margaret & South Marston wards, and
 - 1.2.3 Re-adjust the boundary of SAB & SAD polling districts in St Andrews ward.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to request the Council to:

- 2.1 Endorse the recommended changes to Polling Places within the Borough as follows:
 - 2.1.1 Blunsdon & Highworth Ward - that the polling place for electoral registers BHG & BHI be moved to Westrop School from Highworth Youth Centre.
- 2.2 Endorse the recommended changes to Polling Districts within the Borough as follows:
 - 2.2.1 Blunsdon & Highworth Ward - that new polling districts BHJ and BHK be created to correspond with the parish boundary, both BHJ and BHK fall within South Marston Parish Council.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Sally Sprason*
Direct dial 3999 or email ssprason@swindon.gov.uk

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- 2.2.2 Chiseldon & Lawn Ward - that an adjustment to the polling district boundary for CLB be made to create the polling district CLD to correspond with the parish boundaries, CLB falls within Chiseldon Parish Council and CLD within Central Swindon South Parish Council.
- 2.2.3 Ridgeway Ward – that new polling district RWE be created to correspond with the parish boundary, RWE falls within for Central Swindon South Parish Council.
- 2.2.4 St Margaret and South Marston Ward - that new polling districts SME, SMF and SMG be created to correspond with parish boundaries, SME falls within Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, SMF within South Marston Parish Council and SMG within Nythe, Eldene and Liden Parish Council.
- 2.2.5 St Andrews Ward – that an adjustment to the polling district boundary for SAB and SAD be made to create a more convenient Electoral Register.
- 2.3 Note that the Director of Law and Democratic Services (as Returning Officer) will implement the proposed changes for future Borough, Parish and Parliamentary elections.

3. Detail

Blunsdon & Highworth Ward

- 3.1 Those on the BHG & BHI in Blunsdon & Highworth Ward registers (a combined electorate of 2908) currently vote at Highworth Youth Centre. However the Elections Team have been informed that the polling place has been deemed not fit for purpose and will be demolished at the end of 2017.
- 3.2 Westrop School has been identified as the only suitable location for an additional polling place within the polling district. The Elections Team has been in contact with the school, which has confirmed it is happy for the school to be used as a polling station. The school has good facilities, adequate disabled access and plenty of car parking nearby. See Appendix 1a for the map showing the proposed change of location.

Blunsdon & Highworth Ward

- 3.3 Areas of land situated in BHD and BHF polling districts (Blunsdon & Highworth Borough Wards) need to be identified as separate polling districts within their parish boundary. Therefore it is requested that the new polling districts of BHJ and BHK be created. BHD and BHF fall within Highworth Parish Council and BHJ and BHK fall within South Marston Parish Council. See Appendix 1 for the map showing the proposed adjustment.

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Chiseldon & Lawn Ward

- 3.4 An area of land situated in CLB polling district (Chiseldon & Lawn Borough Ward) needs to be identified as a separate polling district within its parish boundary. Therefore it is requested that the new polling district of CLD be created. CLB falls within Chiseldon Parish Council and CLD falls within Central Swindon South Parish Council. See Appendix 2 for the map showing the proposed adjustment.

Ridgeway Ward

- 3.5 The area of land shown hatched at Appendix 2 lies within the Ridgeway Borough ward but falls within Central Swindon South Parish. This area of land needs to be identified as a separate polling district for electoral purposes. It is proposed that a polling district RWE be created to cover this area.

St Margaret and South Marston Ward

- 3.6 Areas of land that are situated in SMA and SMD polling districts (St Margaret and South Marston Borough Wards) need to be identified as separate polling districts within their parish boundaries. Therefore it is requested that the new polling districts of SME and SMF be created. SMA and SME fall with Stratton St Margaret Parish Council and SMD and SMF fall within South Marston Parish Council. See Appendix 1 for the map showing these proposed adjustments.
- 3.7 An area of land situated in SMC polling district (St Margaret and South Marston Borough Ward) needs to be identified as a separate polling district within its parish boundary. Therefore it is requested that the new polling district of SMG be created. SMG falls within Nythe, Eldene and Liden Parish Council. See Appendix 3 for the map showing the proposed adjustment.

St Andrews Ward

- 3.8 The current electorate total in SAB polling district is approximately 4983 and in SAD polling district they are approximately 228. Therefore it is requested that the polling district boundary be re-adjusted back to its previous position thereby making polling districts that are more suitably balanced in terms of both electorate and convenience of voting, this change would adjust the electorate totals for SAB to approximately 1666 and SAD totals to 3545. The polling place for Electoral Register SAB is Bridlewood School and the Electoral Register SAD is split to provide two polling stations within the polling place of Redhouse Community Centre. See Appendix 4 for the map showing the proposed adjustments.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to review polling places; however this could result in electors being severely inconvenienced as well as not conforming to best practice.

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5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Any administrative costs for the changes to the electoral registers or the provision of polling stations will be covered within existing budgets.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken fully into account in the preparation of this Briefing Note and it is believed the recommendations are compatible with Convention rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No other specific implications were identified during the preparation of this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed in relation to this report. Good practice has been implemented through good and appropriate consultation in relation to all proposals. Good inclusion practice has been implemented when considering changes in polling venues to ensure they are accessible for voters. This demonstrates our duty to advance equality of opportunity.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No implications were identified during the preparation of this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- 6.2 Relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1a – map for proposed change of polling station in Highworth.
- 8.2 Appendix 1 – map for Blunsdon & Highworth and St Margaret & South Marston Wards.
- 8.3 Appendix 2 - map for Chiseldon & Lawn and Ridgeway Wards.

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8.4 Appendix 3 – map for St Margaret & South Marston Ward.

8.5 Appendix 4 – map for St Andrews Ward.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme

9.1 This is not a Key Decision as the final decision will be taken by the council.