

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 23rd January 2024

Title: Polling District, Places and Polling Stations Review 2023

Purpose of the report: To consider the recommendations in relation to changes to Polling Places and Polling Stations.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

Background

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.

The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report and Appendices.

- “Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.
- “Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.
- “Polling stations” are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

The intention of the legislation was reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

Review process

A report was presented to Cabinet on 5th September 2023 where it was agreed to commence the compulsory polling district and places review commences on Monday, 2 October 2023. A timetable for the review was also agreed, with the formal consultation period ending on 10th November 2023.

Legal requirements

The process for a polling district and places review is set out in Schedule A1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Council must:

- publish a notice of the holding of a review;
- consult the (Acting) Returning Officer ((A)RO) for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area;
- publish all representations made by an (A)RO within 30 days of receipt by posting a copy of them at the local authority's office and in at least one conspicuous place in their area and, if the authority maintains a website, by placing a copy on the authority's website;
- seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (A)RO(s) (Appendix B).

On completion of the review, the council must give reasons for its decisions and publish:

- all correspondence sent to an (A)RO in connection with the review (Appendix A);
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability (Appendix B);
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review (Appendix A);
- the minutes of any meeting held by the council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review;
- details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review;
- details of the places where the results of the review have been published.

Key Issues for Consideration

A preliminary review was conducted of the current polling districts, polling places and polling stations within the Ceredigion area and in respect of the parliamentary constituency, with a view to establishing their suitability, and identify any potential alternatives, where considered appropriate.

Whilst assessing the current arrangements, consideration was given to the location, size, availability and accessibility of polling places and stations. In addition, consideration was given to any concerns raised at previous elections regarding the locations, size and appropriateness of some of the polling stations.

Consultation

16 responses were received as part of the formal consultation. Full details of the representations received during the consultation along with the (Acting) Returning Officer's comments and proposals are included in Appendix A.

(Please note that personal details of members of the public have been removed; however, where there are submissions from representative bodies, such as Councils, Councillors, Member of the Senedd, MP etc., these are named in the report.)

Proposals

Consideration was given to all representations received as part of the formal consultation. On that basis, the following changes are proposed to Polling Places and Stations:

<p>Salvation Army moves to Canolfan Morlan, Aberystwyth</p>	<p>The Salvation Army is currently unavailable due to structural issues. In addition, there is a lack of parking at this location.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that the Polling Place and Polling Station is moved to Canolfan Morlan.</p> <p>Canolfan Morlan is outside the community area, but within the centre of Aberystwyth and a short walking distance. In addition, Canolfan Morlan has its own parking area.</p>
<p>Llanwnnen Church Hall moves to Ysgol Cwrtnewydd</p>	<p>The Polling Station is unsatisfactory to meet the requirements of the Election Act 2022. In addition, the number of electors is small.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is relocated to Ysgol Cwrtnewydd due to the lack of options in the Polling District.</p>
<p>Betws Ifan Community Hall moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry</p>	<p>The number of electors is very small with a high proportion voting by post.</p> <p>In addition, there are issues with the building.</p> <p>Both Polling Stations are within the same community area.</p> <p>This was supported by a consultation response.</p>
<p>Bryngwyn Chapel Vestry moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry</p>	<p>Due to low number of electors it is not cost effective as a Polling Place/Station.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is moved to Beulah Chapel Vestry.</p>

	<p>This was supported by a consultation response.</p>
<p>Llandygwydd Church Hall moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry</p>	<p>Due to low number of electors it is not cost effective as a Polling Place/Station.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is moved to Beulah Chapel Vestry.</p> <p>This was supported by a consultation response.</p>
<p>Llangybi Hall moves to the Community Centre at Ysgol Y Dderi, Llangybi</p>	<p>There are issues with the building including with the toilets and kitchen and the water pipes.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is moved to the Community Centre at Ysgol y Dderi, Llangybi.</p>
<p>Neuadd y Paith moves to Llanfarian Village Hall</p>	<p>Due to low number of electors it is not cost effective to open the polling station on polling day.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is merged with Neuadd y Pentref Llanfarian Village Hall.</p>
<p>Llwyncelyn Chapel Vestry moves to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm</p>	<p>There are accessibility issues with the toilets and access to the building. The Village Hall cannot assure us of exclusive use of the building on Polling Day which risks the integrity of the election.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that this Polling Place/Station is moved to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm (where we have been assured that we will have exclusive use of the building on Polling Day).</p>
<p>Llanarth Church Hall moves to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm</p>	<p>It is proposed that this Polling Place/Station is moved to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm (where we have been assured that we will have exclusive use of the building on Polling Day).</p>
<p>Canolfan y Dyffryn moves to Neuadd Aberporth</p>	<p>Canolfan y Dyffryn was a temporary Polling Station whilst renovation works were undertaken at Neuadd Aberporth.</p>

	It is therefore proposed that the Polling Station reverts back to Neuadd Aberporth, which has appropriate accessibility and car parking.
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In the event that the following Polling Stations are unavailable due to a number of factors including renovation works, the contingency arrangements will be as follows:

Harbour House, Trefechan	Aberystwyth Football Club
Canolfan Steffan, Cribyn	Felinfach Memorial Hall
Neuadd Aberporth	Canolfan y Dyffryn

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

Yes.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term: The Review aims to ensure that the most appropriate Polling Places/Stations are in place to meet the needs of the community for the next 5 years.

Collaboration: Work has been undertaken with communities to identify the most appropriate venues for Polling Places/Stations.

Involvement: A statutory consultation commenced on 2 October 2023 and ended 10 November 2023.

The consultation was available on the Council website, was promoted on social media and was sent directly to those listed in Appendix B of the Council report. It was also available in easy read and large format as well as paper copies being made available in libraries.

Prevention: The Review aims to ensure that the most appropriate Polling Places/Stations are in place to meet the needs of the community for the next 5 years.

Integration: Not applicable.

Recommendations:

a) **No changes are made to Polling Districts;**

b) **That the following changes are made to Polling Places and Polling Stations:**

- **Salvation Army moves to Canolfan Morlan, Aberystwyth;**
- **Llanwnnen Church Hall moves to Ysgol Cwrtnwydd;**
- **Betws Ifan Community Hall moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry;**
- **Bryngwyn Chapel Vestry moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry;**
- **Llandygwydd moves to Beulah Chapel Vestry;**
- **Llangybi Hall moves to Community Centre at Ysgol Y Dderi;**
- **Neuadd y Paith moves to Llanfarian Village Hall;**
- **Llwynceilyn Chapel Vestry moves to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm;**
- **Llanarth Church Hall moves to Yr Ysgubor, Bargoed Farm.;**
- **Canolfan y Dyffryn moves to Aberporth Village Hall.**

c) **That contingency arrangements are in place for the following Polling Stations:**

- Harbour House, Trefechan to use Aberystwyth Football Club;
- Canolfan Steffan, Cribyn to use Felinfach Memorial Hall;
- Neuadd Aberporth to use Canolfan y Dyffryn.

Reasons for decision:

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Not applicable.

Policy Framework:

- Council's Constitution;
- Section 18 and 18A of the Representation of the People Act 1983;
- Electoral Administration Act 2006 (as amended).

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Not applicable.

Finance and Procurement implications:

None.

Legal Implications:

Adherence to:

- Section 18 and 18A of the Representation of the People Act 1983
- Electoral Administration Act 2006 (as amended);
- Elections Act 2022.

Staffing implications:

None.

Property / asset implications:

None.

Risk(s):

Failure to meet legislative requirements.

Statutory Powers:

- Section 18 and 18A of the Representation of the People Act 1983
- Electoral Administration Act 2006 (as amended).

Background Papers:

- [Cabinet report, 5th September 2023](#)
- [Consultation papers](#)

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Consultation responses and the Acting Returning Officer's response;
- Appendix B: Consultee/Stakeholder list;
- Appendix C: Integrated Impact Assessment.

Corporate Lead Officer:

Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

Reporting Officer:

Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

Date:

8th December 2023