

Background Information – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Relevant Legislation

Representation of the People Act 1983 and The Review of Polling District and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

Reason for the Review

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 polling district. The Council must keep these arrangements under review.

The Council's last full review was completed in January 2015.

Since the last full review a district boundary review has been undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. To give effect to the changes some of our polling districts require amendment. In some areas our polling districts will be amended to reflect other changes as a result of the review, for example where the name of a parish or town ward is changing.

Where existing arrangements for polling stations remain appropriate for an amended polling district we are in most cases proposing to continue using the existing station.

The arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.

What is a polling district?

Each constituency must be divided into a number of smaller geographical areas called polling districts.

In designating polling districts the local authority must ensure that electors are given such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and that each parish or parish ward is a separate polling district.

What is a polling place?

A polling place is the geographical area in a polling district in which a polling station is located.

What is a polling station?

A polling station is the room or building where the poll takes place. A polling station must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

The designation of a polling station is the responsibility of the Returning Officer for the election and not the local authority.

How the review is conducted

The Council will publish a notice announcing that a review is taking place.

The Acting Returning Officer for each parliamentary constituency within the area will be consulted and asked to make representations on the existing polling stations. Their comments will be published within 30 days of receipt.

Representations will be invited from Councillors, local political parties, parish councils, electors and those persons with particular expertise in relation to access to premises for persons with disabilities.

Copies of background information and the schedule of proposed polling districts and polling places will be available for inspection on the Council's website www.southglos.gov.uk and in the Council's One Stop Shops at:

- Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BS15 9TR
- Kennedy Way, Yate, BS37 4DQ
- Rodway Road, Patchway, BS34 5PE

A report will be submitted to the Councils Regulatory Committee in January 2019.

Revised arrangements will come into force in February 2019 when the Register of Electors is republished to give effect to any changes.

What is not covered by the review

The boundaries of UK parliamentary constituencies, the boundaries and names of South Gloucestershire Council wards or parish or parish ward boundaries are not covered by the review.

The role of the Electoral Commission

The commission do not have a role in the review process itself. However, the commission can consider comments if people do not believe that the review has met the reasonable requirements of electors or taken sufficient account of the needs of disabled electors.

Appeals can be made to the commission by:-

- A Parish Council or Parish Meeting
- 30 or more registered electors
- Anyone who has made comments during the review
- A person who has expertise in access to premises or facilities for disabled persons. This person does not have to be registered as an elector in the area.

As a result of an appeal the commission may direct the local authority to alter polling places arising from the review. If the council do not make these amendments within two months the commission has the power to make the changes itself.