

Subject:	Polling District and Places Review	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Policy Overview and Scrutiny	Date:	1 August 2011
Report of:	Chief Executive as (Acting) Returning Officer - Parliamentary	Portfolio Holder:	Finance and Resources
Key Decision:	X <input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: N/A
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Policy Overview and Scrutiny comment on the Polling District Review, which will form part of the consultation process.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To inform the Committee of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling places as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
 - **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

The review is a statutory requirement and the council will be in breach if a review is not undertaken.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the borough into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district. It also has to keep the polling places and polling districts under review.
- 5.2 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, which came into force on 1st January 2007, introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken. Because the Act is set out in relation to Parliamentary elections the Deputy Returning Officer will be named on documents.

- 5.3 In compliance with the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) regulations 2006, every council in England and Wales had to undertake and complete a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area by 31 December 2007. Following the first review, the council is required to then complete a further review of every polling district and polling place before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous review. As our last Review was resolved by full Council on 7 November and this means that by 7 November 2011, the Council must have undertaken a second review of the electoral arrangements.
- 5.4 A polling district is a section of a Ward and a polling place must be allocated for each polling district. A polling place can be a geographical area, or it can be a specific building or premises. If no specific polling place is designated then the polling district will be the polling place by default. In addition, and unless there are special circumstances that lead the authority to determine otherwise, each parish must be in a separate polling district.
- 5.5 Council should be aware of the distinction between polling districts, places and polling stations. The designation of polling districts and places are a matter for the Council, whereas decisions regarding polling stations are the remit of the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer is responsible for deciding the arrangement and number of polling stations within each Ward. In doing so she has to have regard for the number of electors, type of election, availability of staff and equipment, previous voter turnout and any other relevant matters. Consequently, the detailed arrangements at each Ward may vary from election to election. The Returning Officer is grateful for comments and suggestions regarding polling stations which will assist her in making these provisions.
- 5.6 The Review will begin with a Notice being displayed around Council offices, on the Council's website and a copy published in a press release. This will explain who is to be consulted, where documents relating to the Review are available and invite representation and comments from interested persons. Consultation will take place during August and final proposals will be brought to full Council in September, prior to implementation in time for the annually revised Register of Electors to be published on 1st December 2011.
- 5.7 In addition to the consultation a cross party review panel will be established to oversee comments and responses arising from consultation prior to final submission to full Council.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications will be met from existing budget resources.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 Legal comments included in the report.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 8.1 As part of its deliberations the review needs to consider the equality implications of proposing any changes to existing arrangements. A community impact assessment will be undertaken.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 9.1 With elected Members, community groups and other interested groups and members of the public in line with statutory requirements.

9.2 Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 That the Council make any comments it wishes to the Returning Officer to consider in relation to her proposals for the siting of polling stations.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006	Elections Office, Futures Park, Bacup

Appendices

Appendix 1. Polling Places and Polling District Review 2011 – Timetable

Appendix 2 Polling Districts / Places Review Summary

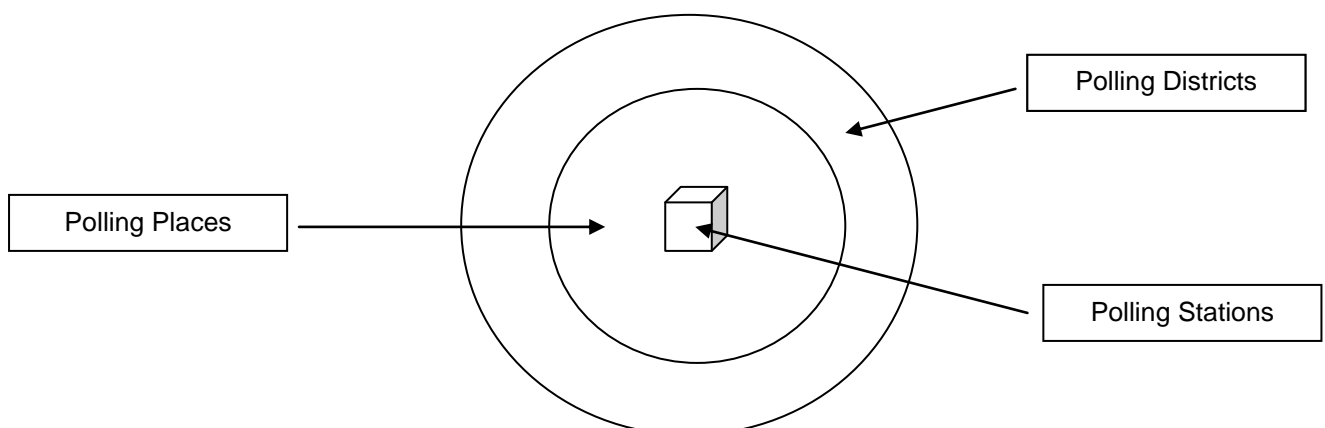
Polling Places & Polling District Review 2011Timetable

Overview Report to Full Council	Wednesday 20 July 2011
Notice of Review	Wednesday 27 July 2011
Commencement of Consultation	Monday 1 August 2011
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Monday 1 August 2011
End of consultation period	Wednesday 31 August 2011
Cross party review panel consider all responses	First week September 2011
Full Council	Tuesday 27 September 2011
Publication of review result (Subject to Council approval)	Thursday 3 November 2011
ERO includes changes to the Register before Publication	Thursday 1 December 2011

Polling Districts/Places Review Summary

- The council is responsible for the review of Polling districts and places not the Acting Returning Officer or the ERO
- The Acting Returning Officer is responsible for the allocation of polling stations
- The review applies to the Parliamentary Constituency not the Local Authority but the local authority deal with the area that is contained within their area
- Reasonable facilities for voting
- Needs for the disabled
- Obligation to keep under review
- Accessible
- Undertake a full review every 4 years
- Second review must be completed by end of 2011
- Logically this would be before 1 December 2011 so that register contains changes.
- If not then register would need to be re-published
- Technically, the order of the review is Polling Districts first and then the polling places: Council can make recommendations to the (Acting) Returning Officer regarding the allocation of polling stations.
- In practicable terms it is better the other way around starting with the existing scheme and then to ask for comments.
- Practicalities
 - Who are the consultees?
 - What information is required?
 - What is the decision making process?
 - What maps can we use? (Web site interactive)
 - Consider projected electorate figures – community builds etc
 - Do we set up a working group?
 - Cross party consultation?

What is a polling district/place?



What is the process?

