
**Review of Local Polling Districts and Polling Places due to Ward
Boundary Changes 2023**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillors Dormer, Leader, and Court, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Will be part of consultation
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	N/A
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 that the ward information go forward as a baseline for the consultation in the statutory review commencing 2 October 2023.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The report sets out the work carried out by the Local Polling Districts and Places Review Working Group to review and recommend Polling Districts and Polling Places for the baseline of consultation within the Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places.
- 2.2 It was necessary to take this step due to the recent ward boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Statutory Instrument SI 2023/654 - "The Redditch (Electoral Changes) Order 2023" made on 14 June 2023 which creates new electoral wards for Redditch Borough Council which will come into operation for Borough Elections in 2024.
- 2.3 As many of the ward boundaries have changed the local review covered, Polling Districts (a geographical area, which tend not to cross Ward or Parish Boundaries), Polling Places (a building or area where Polling Stations are located) and Polling Stations (the room or area

where polling takes place, the decision on location of the polling station is decided by the (Acting) Returning Officer).

- 2.4 At the meeting held on the 11 July the Electoral Matters Committee decided to set up a working group consisting of Cllrs Matthew Dormer (Chair), Juliet Barker-Smith, Luke Court, James Fardoe, Peter Fleming and Monica Stringfellow to review Polling Districts and Polling Places and to report back to this meeting for endorsement to create the baseline for the statutory review.
- 2.5 The Group met three times to discuss and review proposals from officers for individual wards. At the first meeting a set of parameters was agreed. At this meeting and the further meetings, a number of wards were reviewed. If further information was required or changes required regarding individual wards officers or group members were asked to complete additional work and feedback to subsequent meetings.

Working Group Findings

- 2.6 The findings are laid out by ward in alphabetical order although the Working Group did not consider them in that order.
- 2.7 The Working Group agreed to propose polling district code changes, where necessary, to reflect the name of the ward.
- 2.8 Maps for each Ward are contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.9 **Astwood Bank and Feckenham Ward** proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
AFA	St Peters	Crabbs Cross Methodist Church	2114	1
AFB	Hunt End	The Red Lion, Hunt End	1590	1
AFC	St Johns	Feckenham Village Hall	686	1
AFD	Astwood Bank	Astwood Bank Church Hall	2436	2

The new Astwood Bank & Feckenham Ward contains the old Astwood Bank & Feckenham Ward with the inclusion of the St Peters area (CCA) of the previous Crabbs Cross Ward.

In the boundaries of the St Peters polling district, there is a proposed change of polling place. This is due to the previous polling place being in a different polling district and now also in a different ward as a result of the Electoral Review. The Hunt End polling district has a proposed change of polling place as a suitable venue has been found within the polling district, negating the use of a portable building. No further changes are proposed to the polling districts or places.

2.10 Batchley & Brockhill Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
BBA	Brockhill	Holyoakes Field First School	2869	2
BBB	Batchley Brook	Bridley Moor & Batchley Social Club	1605	1
BBC	Batchley	Batchley Community Centre	1724	1
BBD	Foxlydiate	Gospel Hall Church	1459	1

The new Batchley and Brockhill Ward consists of the old Batchley and Brockhill Ward in its entirety plus part of the Musketts (CEA) polling district (the area of north of Holmwood Drive and west of Purshall Close) of the previous Central ward.

The proposed polling district boundaries of the new Batchley & Brockhill ward have been re-drawn to reduce the number of polling districts in line with the number of proposed polling places. It is suggested that the two portable buildings usually located within the area have been replaced with suitable alternatives. These changes would result in a significant cost saving and enhance the voting experience for both electors and polling staff.

It was noted that the use of the Holyoakes Field First School is not ideal especially as it is at the top of the hill, however the Working Group thought that this would be preferable than using a portable building.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE
2023

26 September

Following initial discussions with the Working Group, the proposed boundaries were altered and a new polling district created, with the Gospel Hall Church the proposed polling place.

Officers have visited the new proposed polling places and deem them suitable for voting.

2.11 Central Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
CEA	St Stephen's	Redditch Baptist Church	2757	2
CEB	Smallwood	REDI Centre	1200	1
CEC	Southcrest	Southcrest Evangelical Church	1915	1
CED	Pitcheroak	Bentley Close Communal Room	1030	1

The new Central Ward includes the polling districts Smallwood (CEB), Southcrest (CEC) and part of Musketts (CEA east of Holmwood Drive) of the old Central Ward. It also includes the polling district of St Georges (LPC) from the old Lodge Park Ward and the St Stephen's (ABC) polling district from the old Abbey Ward.

The old Central Ward polling districts are in Redditch North County Division whereas ABC and LPC polling districts are in the Arrow Valley West County Division.

In the CEA polling district, it is proposed that residents formally in the LPC polling district in the small area below the Coventry Highway are placed into the CEA polling district. No further changes are proposed in the polling district.

In CEB, there has been a small boundary change to move those on the northern side of Parsons Road as well as those on Beaufort Street and Old Crest Avenue into the district for convenience of the polling place. No change is proposed to the polling place.

No changes are proposed to CEC other than those moving into the CEB district.

No changes are proposed to the CED district, although those previously in the district on the Bromsgrove road/Vicarage Crescent have now moved in to the Batchley and Brockhill ward.

2.12 Greenlands & Lakeside Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
GLA	Riverside	Abbeydale Community Club	1638	1
GLB	Holloway	Harry Taylor House	1471	1
GLC	Arrowcrest	Lodge Park Social Club	1763	1
GLD	Throckmorton	St John's Church Hall	2489	2

The new ward consists of the Riverside polling district of the old Abbey Ward, Holloway (LPB) and Arrowcrest (LPA) of the old Lodge Park Ward plus part of the Throckmorton (GRA) polling district (north of Throckmorton and Nash roads) of the old Greenlands Ward.

The proposed changes in the Greenlands & Lakeside ward are to move the new GLD polling district boundary along the A4189 to take in the area of Watery Lane.

All polling places are currently used for voting.

2.13 Headless Cross & Oakenshaw Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
HOA	Headless Cross	Rocklands Social Club	3656	2
HOB	Oakenshaw North	Oakenshaw Community Centre	1470	1
HOC	Oakenshaw South	Portable Building, Grangers Lane	2113	1

The new ward is made up of the whole of the old Headless Cross and Oakenshaw Ward plus part of the current Woodrow polling district (GRB) which is south of the current Oakenshaw South polling district (HOD) and the housing behind the hospital. This will mean that the part GRB is in a different County Division to the rest of the Ward.

It is proposed that the Vaynor and Birchfield polling districts combine with the additional inclusion of Ellerdene Close to create a Headless Cross polling district with Rocklands Social Club (the most suitable venue) proposed at the polling place.

Oakenshaw North is mostly unchanged except for the removal of Ellerdene Close, with no proposed change to the polling place.

The current Oakenshaw South polling district has been combined with the part of the previous Woodrow Polling District which is now within the Headless Cross & Oakenshaw ward. The Working Group was split regarding this section of the Ward with some members wishing that all electors go to vote at the portable building in Grangers Lane and others asking an additional polling district be created for the Wirehill area.

Officers have been asked to bring forward potential sites for a portable building, as a polling place for this area, to be discussed at this Committee Meeting.

This will have a bearing on what is recommended for consultation in the Statutory Review.

2.14 Matchborough & Woodrow Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
MWA	Matchborough East	Matchborough East Community Centre	2125	2
MWB	Matchborough West	Matchborough Meeting Rooms	1813	2
MWC	Woodrow	Woodrow Community Centre	3600	2

The new Matchborough & Woodrow Ward consists of parts of both the old Greenlands and the old Matchborough Wards. The whole of polling district Matchborough East (MBA) is included in the new ward.

The bulk of the Matchborough West (MBB) polling district is included in the new ward. This mainly the area below Green Sward Lane but

including Sherbourne Close. The area north of Throckmorton Road in the Throckmorton (GRA) polling district is not included in the new ward.

In addition part of the old Woodrow Polling District (GRB) which is south of the old Oakenshaw South Polling District (HOD) and the housing behind the hospital not included in the new ward.

The new ward consists of both Arrow Valley East and Arrow Valley West County Divisions.

There are no changes proposed to the Matchborough East or the Matchborough West polling district or polling places, other than the loss of the Ipsley area brought about by the electoral review.

It is proposed that the parts of both Throckmorton and Woodrow districts included within the new Matchborough & Woodrow Ward be combined to create one polling district.

All polling places are current and no changes are proposed.

2.15 North Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
NRA	Bordesley	The Abbey Hotel	308	1
NRB	Papermill	Marlfield Barn	2001	1
NRC	Church Hill North	St Andrews Methodist Church	2940	2
NRD	Moons Moat	Church Hill Community Centre	1771	1

The new North Ward is made up from the old Church Hill Ward and the Papermill (ABB) polling district of the old Abbey Ward. The parts of the old Abbey Ward are in a different County Division to the old Church Hill Ward.

It is proposed to re-draw the North Ward polling districts create four separate polling districts.

The creation of polling district NRA is proposed for properties on Hither Green Lane as this residential area is totally separate to the rest of the

ward which presents an obstacle for voting in person. It is proposed that the Abbey Hotel is used as a polling place for this polling district.

Polling district NRB is to the east of the Church Hill ward has been comprised of the Paper Mill Drive and Paper Mill Hill area. The proposed polling district takes into account complaints received from residents on Rush Lane as to the disruption caused by the portable building amongst other concerns on the general use of portable buildings as polling stations. The proposed polling place Marfield Barn is in a central location for the polling district.

Polling District NRC is situation in the north of the North ward The boundary runs along Church Hill Way and includes properties north of the top end of Paper Mill Drive which were previously in the old Papermill polling district. It is proposed that the polling place for this polling district is St Andrews Methodist Church.

Polling District NRD stays the same in terms of residential properties with the inclusion of the commercial estate in Church Hill. There is no change proposed to the polling place, which is Church Hill Community Centre.

2.16 Webheath & Callow Hill Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
WCA	Upper Norgrove	St Philip's Church	2290	2
WCB	Webheath	Webheath Village Hall	2545	2
WCC	Walkwood	Windmill Community Centre	1444	1
WCD	Callow Hill	Gazebo at Callow Hill	816	1

The new Webheath & Callow Hill Ward contains the whole of the current West Ward with the addition of the Callow Hill and Walkwood parts of the current Crabbs Cross ward.

It is proposed that the polling district of Webheath be split in to two polling districts with St Philip's Church proposed as the polling place for the western district and Webheath Village Hall for the eastern district. It is proposed that the boundary be placed from Callow Hill in the south along Green Lane, up to Heathfield Road, encompassing a row of

dwellings on this road, then it would cut through to Springvale Road. Here the properties to the west of Springvale, Packwood, Neighbrook, Lordswood, Knightsford, Sydnal, Shaws, Hennals/Brotherton would be included whereas the opposite side of the road would remain in the Webheath Village polling district.

This boundary would then encompass all of Brichfield Road northwest towards Bromsgrove.

In the Callow Hill polling district, the proposed boundary has been moved north to encompass the houses on Lower Grinsty Lane. The boundary has also been moved to cover the entirety of Redditch Golf Club's course for ease as well as the Walkwood Coppice. The change would move 28 electors into the Callow Hill polling district.

The boundary has been drawn to ensure that dwellings currently under construction to the far east of the boundary remain in the Webheath polling district.

Other than St Philip's Church the proposed polling places remain the same.

2.17 Winyates Ward proposed polling district information:

Polling District Code	Polling District Name	Polling Place	Electorate	No. of Stations
WIA	Winyates East	Tenacres Childrens Centre	2699	2
WIB	Winyates West	Arrow Valley First School	1469	1
WIC	Winyates Green	Winyates Green Community Centre	1642	1
WID	Ipsley	The Old Rectory Hotel	974	1

The whole of the current Winyates Ward plus part of the old Matchborough West (MBB) polling district make up the new Winyates Ward. The area of MBB is part of Ipsley mainly above Green Sward Lane (not including Sherbourne Close) and the area West of Icknield Street Drive.

The creation of a new polling district (WID) is proposed to cover the Ipsley part of the Ward and to include closes off Lowlands Lane to the north of the Warwick Highway. There are no other proposed changes within the Winyates area of the Ward.

The suggested polling place for the WID polling district is The Old Rectory Hotel.

All the other polling places are current, and no change is proposed.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Subject to the Committee's final decisions, there may be some minor financial implications for the Council which arise directly from this review, but which can be contained within existing budgets.
- 3.2 Depending on the outcome of the statutory review there may be additional costs or savings regarding polling stations that are to be used in future elections.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1
 - a) Authority to set Polling District boundaries and to designate polling places rests with the Council (Statutory elements of the Council's Constitution under the Local Government Act 2000). Redditch Borough Council has delegated full relevant powers to this Electoral Matters Committee.
 - b) Decisions about the situation of Polling Stations within designated Polling Places are for the (Acting) Returning Officer. Arrangements must comply with relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Acts and Regulations, the Equality Act 2010 and the Elections Act 2022.
- 4.2 "Relevant authorities" (such as Redditch Borough Council) must
 - "a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the Constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances"; and
 - "b) seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled and, when considering the

designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons. If it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal, then every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access for all electors.”

- 4.3 The Elections Act 2022 has placed new considerations for Local Authorities in regard to polling places. Key considerations are accessibility and checking voter’s ID to ensure polling stations have suitable space to allow polling station staff to check documents and provide a privacy screen or separate area for confidential conversations.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 This report deals with statutory functions but relates to the strategic purpose of an effective and sustainable council.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 It is preferable that choice of polling place location can help minimise unnecessary additional journeys by motorised vehicles.
- 5.3 Emissions and carbon footprint should be reduced as far as possible.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Accessibility for members of minority or disadvantaged groups is a key issue in the selection of suitable Polling Places and Stations. The (Acting) Returning Officer will have a general responsibility to provide equipment to support people with a range of disabilities in the polling station.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 This review will feed into the statutory polling district and polling places review commencing 2 October this year.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 New Polling Districts and Polling Places need to be in place to publish a revised electoral register for local elections to be held 2 May 2024.
- 7.2 Any changes agreed must be likely to be sustainable for a reasonable number of years, as frequent changes of Polling Station are not helpful for electors and undermine their knowledge of, and confidence in, electoral systems.
- 7.3 Choice of Polling Place / Polling Station should not give rise to significant grounds of complaint which might put election results at risk of challenge.
- 7.4 The (Acting) Returning Officer must provide adequate levels and standards of staffing to secure proper polling arrangements. The Electoral Commission has changed its guidance in that no more than 2,250 electors should be allocated to a single polling station with at least 1 Presiding Officer and 3 Poll Clerks.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Ward Maps

Background papers - Ward Analysis for each new Ward

**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE
2023**

26 September

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder		Sent 12 September
Head of Service		Sent 12 September
Financial Services		Sent 12 September
Legal Services		Sent 12 September