

<b>Report to</b>	Council
<b>Date of meeting</b>	15 October 2019
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Councillor Richard Mainon / Judith Greenhalgh, Electoral Registration Officer
<b>Report author</b>	Steve Price, Democratic Services Manager and Gareth Evans, Electoral Services Officer
<b>Title</b>	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

## 1. What is the report about?

The Council has a statutory duty to divide its area into polling districts and designate a polling place for each district. It also has a statutory duty to keep these arrangements under review.

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report considers the outcome of a public consultation process and makes recommendations to Council in order to complete the statutory review process.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

That the County Council agrees the existing arrangements for polling districts and polling places as detailed in Appendix 1, subject to authorising:

- a the use of Building 3 (on the Ysgol Glan Clwyd / St Asaph Leisure Centre campus) as the polling station for Polling District BLA if re-modelling works make the building suitable for use as a polling station.
- b the use of Rhyl Rugby Club's Clubhouse on Tynewydd Road, Rhyl for Polling District BRB if it becomes available for use as a polling station.

c the use of the Ruthin Town Council Community Hub at the Old Courthouse, St Peter's Square, Ruthin for Polling District CAA following the closure of Canolfan Awelon.

## **4. Report details**

4.1 A public consultation opened on the 1 July 2019 inviting comments from electors and interested parties on the current arrangements. The consultation closed on the 6 September 2019.

4.2 The County of Denbighshire has 30 electoral wards divided up into 67 polling districts and serviced by 65 polling places. The location and facilities provided by the existing arrangements appear to be well-received by the electorate year on year with very few complaints being received regarding their accessibility or location.

4.3 As a result, the principles underlying the Council's approach to polling districts and polling places outlined in the public consultation were:

(a) to retain the current network of polling districts, places and stations to ensure that as far as possible that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

(b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.

(c) any proposed changes to the current structure shown in Appendix 1 should be able to demonstrate wide support within the polling district. For example, the support of at least 30 registered local government electors, in accordance with the aims outlined in subsection (b) of Section 18D of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

## **Consultation Responses**

4.4 The consultation document highlighted a number of polling districts in Denbigh, St Asaph, Rhyl and Ruthin where representations were actively sought owing to their particular circumstances. Consultees were also entitled to comment on other polling stations and those responses are also shown in Appendix 2 together with any recommendations from Electoral Services.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The provision of adequate polling districts and polling places is important for the electors of Denbighshire to engage in the democratic process, and therefore assisting the authority in retaining its connections with the Community.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

There are no costs arising from the review and recommendations other than staff time.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

This report and its recommendations do not introduce a new policy or approach in respect of the provision of polling districts and places. Accordingly, this report does not require a Well-being Impact Assessment.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

The review process requires the Council to publish a notice of holding the review, and consult the Acting Returning Officer for each Parliamentary Constituency in the Council's area. The Council then invites comments on the proposals. The consultation document is published on the Council's website, and also sent to county councillors, local Members of Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, local political parties and any other interested groups or persons, including those who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Cost implications arising from the review are minimal and will be contained within existing resources.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The Council is required to confirm its arrangements to comply with legislative duties.

## **11 Power to make the Decision**

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. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places.