

Polling District and Polling Places Review 2019

Supporting Information

Background Information

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires local authorities to undertake a compulsory review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places in its area.

In order to comply with the above legislation, Wigan Council is required to complete a full review of all polling districts and polling places every five years.

The arrangements made for United Kingdom Parliamentary elections are also used at all other elections and referendums.

What is a Polling District?

A 'polling district' is a geographical area. Legislation requires that each community must be a separate polling district. If the community is large, and in order to provide easy access, the community can be divided into smaller polling districts.

What is a Polling Place?

A 'polling place' is the geographical area, in which a polling station is located. There is no legal definition of a polling place. The geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district. Wigan Council has defined each polling district as the polling place rather than a particular building for practical purposes.

What is a Polling Station?

A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant (Acting) Returning Officer for the election.

How the Review is conducted

The (Acting) Returning Officer will be consulted on the current arrangements and will make representations on the existing polling stations used.

Aim of the review

In conducting this review, the Council must seek to ensure that:-

- all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- polling places are accessible to all electors and all sections of the community; and
- when considering or reviewing the designation of a polling place, have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

What is being reviewed?

- The polling district boundaries within each ward of each constituency
- The location of the polling place in each polling district
- The accessibility of each polling place
- Buildings that might be considered for use as polling stations

What CANNOT be reviewed at this time?

- The ward boundaries
- The parish boundaries
- The parliamentary constituency boundaries

Who will be consulted?

- Residents of Wigan Council
- Local Councillor's
- Members of Parliament for the Constituencies of Leigh, Makerfield, Wigan and Bolton West.
- Political parties
- Parish Councils
- Voluntary Groups
- Community Groups
- Individuals and organisations with expertise on access issues

What makes a suitable polling place?

It is important to consider what factors define a good polling place when submitting any suggestions. It is important that alternative premises are identified when suggesting a change in polling place.

Polling places should have, as a minimum, the following characteristics:

- 1) Be central relative to the location of electors in the polling district, where possible.
- 2) Accessibility for all electors, including those with disabilities, where possible.
- 3) Adequate, safe parking for the size of the electorate. Areas around polling stations, including car parks (if any), should be well lit, as the polling station is open until 10:00pm.
- 4) Facilities for polling staff, e.g. toilets, kitchen or coffee & tea making facilities, heating/cooling systems, comfortable adult sized chairs and tables.

5) The size of the room/building used as the polling station must be adequate for the size of the electorate.

Guidance on Submission of Representations and Suggestions

The Council welcomes the views of all residents, particularly disabled residents, any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability on its proposals and the (Acting) Returning Officer's representation or any other matter relating to the electoral process.

Persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be considered for use as a polling station.

Information is provided to help the electorate in making informed representations and suggestions to the (Acting) Returning Officer about the allocation of polling places in the Borough of Wigan.

Timetable for the Review

Publication of Notice and Commencement of the review	Monday 2 September 2019
Closing Date for Representations	Friday 4 October 2019
Consideration of all Representations	Friday 4 October 2019 – Friday 1 November 2019
Revised Electoral Register published	Saturday 1 February 2020
Final proposals considered at Full Council Meeting	Wednesday 4 March 2020