

---

Meeting	Audit And Governance Committee
Date	17 March 2025
Present	Councillors Hollyer (Chair), J Burton (Vice-Chair), Fisher, Merrett, Rose, Coles and Watson
Apologies	Mr Myles Binney (Independent Member)

---

## **Part B Minute – Recommendation to Council**

### **68. Polling District and Polling Place Review**

The Head of Democratic Governance introduced the report, noting that the Council had a statutory duty to review polling districts and polling places. It was confirmed that the Council undertook an accessibility audit after a recent set of elections, and it was confirmed that most issues raised could be mitigated. It was also noted that the recommendation was for the Committee to commend the changes to Council, and that with power be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to make changes in cases where urgent changes might be required.

The Committee discussed the proposed changes to polling districts and polling places. Members discussed proposed changes in relation to several areas such as Portland Street, Danesgate, and Ouse Lea. Members enquired about the moving of CD polling district to Moor Lane Youth Centre and whether there were other suitable options. Officers confirmed that they would review the options for moving CD and would consult Ward Councillors on proposals. The Committee also raised concerns at the lack of appropriate locations for polling places around Beckfield Lane and Knapton, especially as new housing developments progress. Members also raised questions relating to the number of electors listed in Stockton on the Forest and it was confirmed Officers would review this against the electoral register to ensure its data is correct. The Committee also noted the opportunity when amending boundaries to try and include information encouraging people to get valid ID for voting.

Members welcomed the accessibility audit that was undertaken and were reassured that polling places that had not been audited during the election, had now been audited.

The Committee discussed the Community Governance Review (CGR) process, which had been raised in some of the consultation responses. It was confirmed that the statutory timeframe for completing a CGR was 12 months from the point of agreeing terms of reference to approving a final Structural Changes Order. The Committee requested that a report be presented to a future meeting, setting out details of the process that would be required along with anticipated costs.

Recommended:

- i. That Council agree the final recommendations to the polling places and districts as set out in Annex 1 of this report until the next statutory review, or until it is superseded by any subsequent review of any polling place or district;
- ii. That Council agree to publish the revised electoral register on 1 May 2025. (Where the ERO has decided to revise their register by republishing it to incorporate the changes, the law requires that they publish a notice 14 calendar days before the publication of the revised version of the register in a local newspaper, at their office and at some other conspicuous place or places in the area);
- iii. That Council agree to delegate to the Chief Operating Officer, in their capacity as the Council's Returning Officer, the power to make urgent changes to the polling scheme during a statutory election period, where time does not permit a report to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee. Where such urgent changes are proposed, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee will be consulted, along with the relevant ward councillors. This will ensure that polling arrangements in the City remain fit for purpose for each election called.

Reason: To comply with statutory requirements and to give better flexibility with making decisions regarding polling places between statutory reviews.

Cllr Hollyer, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.55 pm].