

## CITY COUNCIL - 3 DECEMBER 2007

### REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER

#### REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES 2007

##### **1 SUMMARY**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 has placed a new duty on the Council to review its parliamentary polling districts and places. The first full review must be finalised by 31 December 2007 and then at least every four years thereafter.

##### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the City Council's existing scheme of polling districts and places be amended by the revisions set out in Appendix 1.

##### **3 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council's area is divided into Polling Districts and Polling Places for electoral purposes. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for councils to review these by the end of 2007 for parliamentary elections and then every four years after. This does not preclude the Council from conducting a review of all or some of its polling districts and places at any other time. In conducting the review, the Council is required:-

- to seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- so far as is reasonable and practicable to have regard to access for disabled persons;
- to locate a polling place in its polling district unless special circumstances apply;
- to choose a polling place which electors throughout the district will know and be able to reach.

3.2 Electoral Commission guidance on this matter also recommends that regard should be given to the following:-

- any significant barriers between electors and their polling stations e.g. major roads and rivers;
- the number of electors per polling station and place, the numbers who vote by post and turn out;
- the balance between the quality of a polling place (for electors, elections staff and the conduct of the ballot) and the distance between residents and the venue.

3.3 The review process has been undertaken as prescribed by regulations. The timetable involved and the consultees are set out in Appendix 2.

3.4 Polling districts are areas created by the partition of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors. The location of polling districts and places is the responsibility of Council and the location of polling stations the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

3.5 Previously the City Council has designated the whole polling district as the polling place so that it is easier for polling stations to be altered in the event of a building becoming unavailable. This is now discouraged by section 18 (4) (e) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 which suggests that the polling place be defined. The polling places detailed in the consultation document and in this report do therefore refer to the specific buildings identified for use, with the polling station being the specific room within the polling place which the Returning Officer has identified as fit for purpose.

3.6 The City Council last reviewed polling districts and places in 2002. Since then, the Returning Officer has made adjustments to polling stations to take account of access issues, availability of venues or changes in local circumstances. Last year, in preparation for the May local elections and for this review, the Returning Officer consulted with elected members about the location of polling stations and, with the Council's Access Officer, undertook a detailed survey of every polling station. New venues were found for sites which were no longer suitable or where better alternatives existed and, in some instances, works were undertaken to improve access standards as recommended by the Access Officer. Given the detailed survey which had occurred already and the electorate's familiarity with current arrangements because of the

recent local elections, the existing scheme of polling districts and places was used as the basis of the review.

- 3.7 Details of the existing scheme of polling districts and places, including the formal representations of the Returning Officer, (as at 5 October) identifying where, in his view, the status quo should be maintained or where changes were required, have been circulated separately to members together with electorate details. Maps showing the location of existing and proposed polling districts and places are on display in the Members Room.
- 3.8 Public Representations have been few and are set out in Appendix 3 together with a response. As a final stage in the consultation process the Executive Board considered and endorsed the proposals contained in Appendix 1 at their meeting on 20 November 2007.

#### **4 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The determination of polling districts and places is a responsibility of Council and to comply with the provisions of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 the review must be completed, and a new scheme of polling districts and places agreed, by 31 December 2007.
- 4.2 Each polling district and place in the current scheme has been assessed against the review's overall purpose and criteria set out in para.3.1 and in the light of representations received. Polling places have also been assessed with regard to the safety of electors and elections staff either in terms of their location in the polling district, the immediate environment, access and the fabric or layout of each building. Security of children on premises adjacent to, or located within, a polling station has also been considered. Having regard to all these factors, together with the improvements made to the existing scheme prior to the recent local elections in May 2007 and to the small number of representations received during public consultation, it is recommended that the current scheme of polling places and districts be retained subject to the revisions in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 In determining its scheme of polling districts and places, Council must seek to address the reasonable needs of electors and take account of the needs of disabled people. Failure to do so could

result in appeals to the Electoral Commission and a direction from them that changes are made to polling places. The proposals contained in this report represent the most suitable options available to the Council at the current time. There are six polling places where disabled access improvements remain desirable and an assessment of the works required will be undertaken with the owners of these premises. A contribution to the costs involved may be required to achieve the necessary access standards and secure the premises for future use on election days.

4.4 Electoral Services will keep polling places under review but where any polling place becomes unavailable before an election and there is no time to conduct a formal review to choose a new one, the Returning Officer may designate a new polling place by issuing a public notice.

## **5 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

5.1 Reference document from City Development detailing numbers of properties under construction or with planning permission over a projected period of 4 years.

5.2 Evaluation forms from polling station staff for the May 2007 local elections.

5.3 Absent voters numbers for May 2007.

## **6 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

6.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006

6.2 The Review of Polling Districts and Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

6.3 Electoral Commission circular EC28/2007

**COUNCILLOR EDWARDS  
DEPUTY LEADER**

**REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES 2007 – PROPOSED CHANGES TO CURRENT SCHEME**

<b>POLLING DISTRICT/ WARD</b>	<b>POLLING PLACE</b>	<b>PROPOSED REVISION TO POLLING DISTRICT</b>	<b>PROPOSED REVISION TO POLLING PLACE</b>	<b>REASONS FOR REVISION</b>
<b>NOTTINGHAM EAST CONSTITUENCY</b>				
ANNA 1	YMCA , Shakespeare Street	N/A	Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre (NVAC), Mansfield Road	YMCA no longer available. NVAC and the International Community Centre have been assessed and NVAC is the most suitable as it has better access than the ICC and is closest to the existing polling place.
ANNC	Sycamore Infant School, Abbotsford Drive	N/A	St Augustine's Church Hall, Westville Gardens	The church hall is suitable in terms of location and access. Its use would avoid the need for closure of a school on election day.
ARBB	Bentinck Primary	N/A	7 <sup>th</sup> Nottm. Trafalgar Scout	Access to the current station is poor because of a high threshold and narrow

	School, Bentinck Road		Lodge, Noel Street	doors. The Scout Lodge offers a more accessible, if not ideal, alternative and the Scout Group are investigating the works required to further improve access. Use of the scout lodge would also mean that closure of a school on elections day would be avoided.
ARBD1	Arboretum Nursery School	N/A	Nottingham Trent University, Byron House, Shakespeare Street	Arboretum Nursery School will close in August 2008. Byron House provides the only other accessible venue in this area.
MAPA	Elms Primary School, Cranmer Street	N/A	Portable Unit on the grass verge at Elm Avenue adjacent to the school entrance	Elms Primary School is to close in August 2008. No suitable alternative premises in the district have been identified and investigations by the Highways Team have indicated that a portable unit can be sited safely on Elm Avenue.
SHEB	Music Room, Haywood School, Cragdale	N/A	City Hospital Social Club, City Hospital Campus	Haywood School is due for closure in August 2009. The City Hospital Social Club presents the next best alternative in the area both in terms of access and

	Road entrance			safety. Some minor improvements to the ramped access will need to be negotiated with the hospital.
<b>NOTTINGHAM NORTH CONSTITUENCY</b>				
ASPD	Ambleside Primary School, Minver Crescent (South Gate)	N/A	Minver Sports Hall, Minver Crescent	The Sports Hall provides a very accessible and prominent alternative within the polling district while avoiding the need for closure of the school. This change addresses representations made during the consultation process. See also ASPE below.
ASPE	Ambleside Primary School, Minver Crescent (South Gate)	N/A	Minver Sports Hall, Minver Crescent	Although just outside the polling district, the Sports Hall provides a very accessible and prominent alternative to the school. In the absence of alternative premises which are <u>central</u> to polling district ASPE, it appears sensible to locate the polling place for both ASPD and ASPE at a single location which can comfortably cope with the number of electors involved. A school closure is avoided and the proposed change addresses representations made during the

				consultation process.
BESA	Portable unit, The Green, Whitton Close, Harkstead Road	Delete boundary line between BESA and BESB and merge to make a single polling district known as Bestwood A. Other polling districts in Bestwood ward to be renamed accordingly.	Portable Unit, car park adjacent Kyle View Shopping Centre	Following representations about the unsuitability of the existing polling place, further investigations have been made to identify another premise or location. Kyle View Shops car park provides a prominent and central location if the two polling districts BESA and BESB are merged and is one which has been assessed as safe by the Highways team for the siting of a portable unit. There appear to be no other suitable alternatives within the polling district. Turn out figures would indicate that the single polling place is adequate to meet the needs of the two merged districts.
BESB	Eastglade Primary School, Whitcombe Gardens	Delete boundary line between BESA and BESB and merge to make a single	Portable Unit, car park adjacent Kyle View Shopping Centre	Eastglade School has closed and there are no alternative premises in the polling district. In the absence of other alternatives, Kyle View Shops car park provides a prominent and central location



		polling district known as Bestwood A. Other polling districts in Bestwood ward to be renamed accordingly.		if the two polling districts of BESA and BESB are merged and has been assessed as safe by the Highways team for the siting of a portable unit. Turn out figures would indicate that the single polling place is adequate to meet the needs of the two merged districts.
BUFD	Top Valley Community Centre, Knights Close	N/A	Westglade Primary School, Syke Road	Top Valley Community Centre has closed. Westglade Primary School offers the only alternative accessible premises, although it is outside the polling district. Representations have been made that a portable unit could be sited on the Tesco Car park but this location is also outside the polling district and is further away from the electorate concerned. As Westglade School is required anyway as the polling place for polling district BUFC and can cope with the electorate for both districts there would appear to be little advantage in having an additional portable polling station.
BULB	Springfield Primary	N/A	The Healthy Living Centre,	The Healthy Living Centre is a new building with level access, plenty of

	School, Lawton Drive		Lawton Drive	meeting rooms and is located adjacent to the Primary School so the electorate is unlikely to be confused by the change. Its use will provide better access and avoid the need for closure of a school.
LEEA	St Teresa's School, Kingsbury Drive	N/A	St Theresa's Church Hall, Kingsbury Drive	The church hall has better access than the school and, being located very nearby to the existing polling station, the electorate is unlikely to be confused by the change. A school closure is also avoided.
<b>NOTTINGHAM SOUTH CONSTITUENCY</b>				
ANNA2	YMCA , Shakespeare Street	N/A	Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre (NVAC), Mansfield Road	YMCA no longer available. NVAC and the International Community Centre have been assessed and NVAC is the most suitable as it is closest to the existing polling place and has better access than the ICC.
ARBC	Unity Primary School, Forest Road West, Ayr	N/A	All Saints Wellness and Family YMCA, 75 Raleigh Street	The Unity Primary School is due to close in August 2008. The Wellness and Family YMCA is well located and provides good access.

	Street Entrance			
ARBD2	Arboretum Nursery School	N/A	Nottingham Trent University, Byron House, Shakespeare Street	Arboretum Nursery School will close in August 2008. Byron House provides the only other accessible venue in this area.
BRIB	Unitarian Chapel, 3 Plumtre Street	N/A	Severns House Foyer, Middle Pavement	The Unitarian Chapel has unsuitable access having a large step at the entrance. It is also becoming too small for the growing electorate in the area. In the absence of other suitable locations, Severns House is a better alternative with level access and a central location to the polling district.
CLND	Clifton Village Hall, Clifton Green	N/A	Portable Unit, Meden Close	The Village Hall is too far from the Clifton Grove Estate. The Sports Hall on the Clifton Campus could be an alternative but the campus can be confusing for non student electors. Meden Close offers a

				central solution to meet the needs of both the resident and student populations. The Highways Team have confirmed that the location is safe for the siting of a portable unit. It is adjacent to the nearest footpath from the university campus, is level with dropped kerbs and well lit.
CLSA	Glapton Primary School, Glapton Lane	N/A	Clifton Village Hall, Clifton Green	Feedback from the electorate / elected members strongly suggests that the village hall is preferred over Glapton Primary School, mainly because of the need to pass the hall and negotiate a major road (A453) to get to the school. On these grounds it seems appropriate that the Village Hall should be the agreed polling place even though it is outside the CLSA polling district. Access into the village hall is also not as good as at the school because of a 120mm step but this matter will be pursued with the Village Hall with a view to access improvements being made.

DUNA	Edna G Olds Primary School , Church Street	N/A	The Lenton Centre, Willoughby Street	One representation has been received against this change on the basis that the school has not presented access issues before and that the Lenton Centre may not be big enough to cope with elector numbers at peak times. Although accommodation at the Lenton Centre is limited, turn out is low and, even with a substantial increase, the space is considered adequate. This is the preferred option given its better access, it's proximity to the existing polling station and avoiding closing a school on election day.
RPAA	St. Peter's Church Hall, Hartley Road	Change of polling district boundary to incorporate the following streets into RPAA from RPAC to enable easier access to the proposed polling place at the Radford Care	The Radford Care Group, 25-31 Prospect Street	St. Peter's Church Hall is up for sale. Radford Care Group is centrally located premises with good access.

		<p>Group Premises:-  Player Street  Ben Street  Wallan Street  Osborne Street  Radford  Boulevard  Alfreton Road  Brook Court</p>		
RPAC	John Carroll Community Centre	Change of polling district boundary to remove the following streets from RPAC and incorporate into RPAA to enable easier access to the proposed polling place at the Radford Care	N/A	The proposed change in the polling district boundary will make access to a polling station easier for residents in the streets affected.

		Group Premises:- Player Street Ben Street Wallan Street Osborne Street Radford Boulevard Alfreton Road Brook Court		
RPAE	Douglas Primary School , Ilkeston Road	N/A	Garden Street Children's Resources Centre, Garden Street, off Ilkeston Road	Douglas Primary School is due to close in August 2008. No other sites are available/accessibile.

WLAC	University of Nottingham Sports and Social Club	Change of polling district boundary to remove the following streets from polling district WLAC and (a) incorporate into WLAD:- Charles Avenue Raglan court Varden Avenue Lawley Avenue and (b) incorporate into WLAE:- 210 to 215 University Boulevard	Portland Building, University of Nottingham Campus	The student union uses the Portland building for its own elections and good turnout is achieved. The change in the boundary will mean that WLAC includes only the university campus with a centralised polling place located in the Portland Building. The original consultation document did not include the proposal to reallocate some properties into polling district WLAE and this anomaly has only come to light as the review has progressed. These electors will now have a polling place that is located nearer to their homes.
WLAD	Tenants Hall , Baslow Drive	Change of polling district boundary to incorporate the following streets moved from	N/A	The student union uses the Portland building for its own elections and good turnout is achieved. The change in the boundary will mean that WLAC includes only the university campus with a



		<p>WLAC:- Charles Avenue Raglan Court Varden Avenue Lawley Avenue</p>		<p>centralised polling place located in the Portland Building. The electorate affected by the boundary change and moved into polling district WLAD from WLAC will have the benefit of a larger and more accessible polling place than the University Sports and Social Club and one which is about the same travelling distance away.</p>
WLAE	<p>Boundary Community Centre, Wensor Avenue</p>	<p>Change of polling district boundary to incorporate the following properties from WLAC:- 210 to 215 University Boulevard</p>		<p>The student union uses the Portland building for its own elections and good turnout is achieved. The change in the boundary will mean that WLAC includes only the university campus with a centralised polling place located in the Portland Building. The original consultation document did not include the proposal to reallocate some properties into polling district WLAE and this anomaly has only come to light as the review has progressed. These electors will now have a polling place that is located nearer to their homes.</p>

**Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2007**  
**Review Timetable and Consultation**

The published review timetable is as follows:-

Publication of notice and consultation document	17 August 2007
Closing date for public representations	21 September 2007
Publication of the Returning Officer's representations	5 October 2007
Final date for public comment on the Returning Officer's representations	26 October 2007
Executive Board	20 November 2007
Full Council agrees final scheme	3 December 2007

Public notice was achieved by advert in the Nottingham Evening Post and the display of the notice at every City community centre and library. The consultation document was available for inspection at the Guildhall and on the Council's website.

All City Councillors, MPs and party agents were informed. The following bodies were specifically invited to comment on the consultation documents and were sent copies of the Returning Officer's representations:-

Royal National Institute for the Blind (East Midlands East)  
SCOPE (East Region)  
Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)  
National Federation of the Blind  
Disabled Peoples Advocacy  
Coalition of Disabled People  
Association of Disabled Professionals and RADAR  
Disabled Peoples Movement  
Royal Society for the Blind

Public notice of the Returning Officer's representations was given in the Nottingham Evening Post on 5 October 2007 and on the Council's website. All representations made in response were posted on the council's website as and when they were received.

A briefing session and opportunity for City Councillors to discuss the Returning Officer's representations was held on 18 October 2007 but no representations were received.

Similarly individual sessions for political groups have been offered but no representations have been made.

**PARLIAMENTARY POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES REVIEW 2007- REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

No representations were received on the initial consultation during 17 August and 21 September 2007.

The following representations have been received in response to the Returning Officer's representations published on 5 October 2007:-

Date	Ward	Name	Representations	Response
15/10/07	Aspley	Cllr Chapman	<p>“Thank you for the notice of your proposals for Parliamentary Polling Districts. I am happy with all proposals for Aspley Ward other than the proposals for Aspley D and E. I have problems with the proposals for Aspley D and E on 3 grounds:-</p> <p>1 The fact that at the last election there was only one polling station on the Minver Crescent campus, which I am convinced reduced the propensity of people to come out to vote,</p>	<p><b>The original proposal to use Ambleside Primary School for both ASPD and ASPE polling districts has been changed in response to Cllr Chapman's representations.</b></p> <p>There is no suitable building either in the north or central to APSD. Further investigations identified that the Minver Sports Hall provided a suitable alternative to Ambleside School for ASPD and</p>

			<p>particularly in Aspley D, which was the area farthest away from the single polling station - we used to have two polling stations by the way and that caused no difficulties. So in short, I believe that a single polling district for the whole of the Aspley estate will reduce the inclination for people to come out and vote in those parts which are more remote from that single polling station.</p>	<p>the Aspley Training Centre for ASPE. As there is no venue in ASPE which is located more centrally to the electorate and, given that the Sports Hall and Training Centre are located so close to each other anyway and use the same access, it is proposed that a single polling place be created at the Sports Centre which has the capacity to deal with both polling districts.</p>
			<p>2 There is no mention that Ambleside School is being rebuilt and therefore the south entrance will no longer be a main entrance. Indeed, I don't think anybody has made up their mind what is going to happen to the Minver Crescent south entrance. The main entrance is likely to be the West entrance although I have no doubt there will be some access from the East entrance. In short, I would</p>	

			<p>suggest that the proposals will have to be revised because of reconfiguration of the campus. However, I may be wrong because I am doing all this from memory.</p>	
			<p>3 You state that the use of Ambleside School should continue on the basis that the suitable alternative - the Aspley Training Centre - is no better or no worse. Can I suggest that, having a school take a whole day off from educating its children is a substantial disadvantage. There would be no such disadvantage were the Aspley Training Centre to be used. In short we could prevent a lot of children from losing a day's valuable education, were we to choose the Training Centre."</p>	

15/10/07	Bestwood	Cllr Grocock	<p>Portable Unit, the Green, Whitton Close.</p> <p>“The above polling station has been a source of embarrassment to this authority for the past 25 years, due to its location and the lack of facilities for the Election Officers. So could we please look to locate the portable unit on level ground also to make safe, secure and useable the ramp used for access for residents that have mobility difficulties.</p> <p>I notice from the document supplied that polling station BESB is not available for use. Can you clarify therefore whether the portable unit at The Green, Whitton Close will have the capacity for the 1,500 plus available voters from this closed BESB polling station?”</p>	<p><b>The original proposal has been changed In response to Cllr Grocock’s concerns.</b></p> <p>A new site for a portable unit has been identified at the shops at Kyle View and it is suggested that this serves both polling districts BESA and BESB which should be combined into a single polling district.</p>
17/10/07	Aspley	Graham Allen MP	<p>“I would like it noted that I support the points made by Councillor Chapman. I have noticed the same</p>	<p>See response to Cllr Chapman’s representations above.</p>

			difficulties and I think the solution proposed by the local councillor is definitely the best way forward to ensure adequate democratic participation in this area.”	
17/10/07	Bridge	Jamie Tee, Headteacher, Riverside Nursery School	Re the proposed use of the nursery school as a polling station: “The proposed entrance will include voters walking through the staff car park, which could cause security issues.”	<b>The original proposal to use the nursery school instead of Riverside School is withdrawn.</b>  The Headteacher is supportive of the Council’s need to find suitable polling places. However, using the nursery school instead of the school itself on polling days may present security issues for both pupils and property.
22/10/07	St Ann’s	Cllr Liversidge	“I do not see Russell Youth Club to be centrally located but it is at the bottom of the hill. Whilst I agree that Sneinton St Stephens C of E Primary School is at the top of steep stairs for people living on Windmill Lane, Ansty Rise, Elford Rise, Walton Avenue etc, they have to negotiate those steps. Before boundary	<b>No change to the original proposal is planned in response to Cllr Liversidge’s representation.</b>  The Sneinton C of E School has been used in the past as a polling station for the Manvers G polling district, but all electors were on



			changes this school was the normal polling station for this area.”	Windmill Lane or above and towards Sneinton Dale. The Access Officer’s view is that access to the Russell Youth Club is very good and better than the school. Electors would be required to walk up a steep hill and steps and given that one of the primary purposes of the review is to improve access there appears little compelling reason to change the existing polling place. Use of the school would of course impact on education on election days.
25/10/07	Bulwell Forest	Cllr Campbell	“As a result of Top Valley Community Centre being closed I note that you are suggesting that BFD also uses Westglade School. See page 45 (of the Returning Officer’s representations). Given that this is a low turn out have you considered having a Portacabin at the bottom of Tesco supermarket as an additional district?”	<b>No change to the original proposal is planned in response to Cllr Campbell’s representation.</b>  Tesco Car park is outside the polling district and is further away from the electorate concerned. As Westglade School is required anyway as the polling place for polling district BUFC and can cope

				with the electorate for both districts there would appear to be little advantage in having an additional portable polling station.
25/10/07	Dunkirk and Lenton	Cllr Trimble	“This is a very busy polling station and I do not think that the Lenton Centre could cope with the peak flow during the day. Also, access has never been a problem at the school.”	<p><b>No change to the original proposal is planned in response to Cllr Trimble’s representation.</b></p> <p>Although accommodation at the Lenton Centre is limited, turn out is low and, even with a substantial increase, the space is considered adequate. This is the preferred option given its much better access, it’s proximity to the existing polling station and avoiding closing a school on election day.</p>