

North Somerset Council

Report to the Planning & Regulatory Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 November 2023

Subject of Report: Polling District and Polling Places Review

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Head of Democratic and Electoral Services

Key Decision: No

Reason: This is not an Executive decision

Recommendations

That the proposed changes to polling district boundaries and polling places set out in Appendices A to C to this report be approved to take effect with the republication of the 2023 Register of Electors on 1st December 2023 in order to comply with the requirements of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 to provide convenient, efficient, and effective electoral arrangements.

1. Summary of Report

This report seeks approval of changes to polling districts taking account of proposals made and comments received in carrying out the review of polling districts and polling places within North Somerset.

2. Policy

In relation to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 and as recommended by the Electoral Commission.

3. Details

3.1 Background

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.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

The intention of the legislation was that reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term

Parliament Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 means:

- the UK Parliament can be dissolved by the King on request of the Prime Minister at any time within the 5 years of the life of the Parliament
- the next general election must take place before Tuesday 28 January 2025, but it could happen at any point before then
- there is no longer a link between the timing of the compulsory polling district and places review falling in a 16-month period ending 3 months before a scheduled general election.

In addition, the Boundary Commission for England has currently been undertaking a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. The Commission has now published its final recommendations the Orders for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries have been made. The new boundaries will therefore be used for the next general election.

These issues mean it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible so that North Somerset Council has agreed polling districts and places to be used for the next parliamentary election and has a polling scheme in place which reflects the new constituencies.

3.2 Scope of the review

This review is of polling districts and polling places only. It does not include polling stations which is a matter reserved to the Returning Officer.

The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report and appendices:

- Polling districts – geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided
- Polling places – geographical areas in which a polling station is located
- Polling stations – the location of the issuing desks in the area which is designated as a polling place

3.3 Review process

The review commenced with publication of the review document on Monday 2 October. Details of the proposed polling districts and polling places were made available on the North Somerset Council website (<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/voting-elections/polling-districts-polling-places-review-2023>) and also for inspection at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ. Representations could be submitted in writing, by email or via our online consultation portal until Friday 27 October 2023.

The only responses received to the consultation related specifically to the location of polling stations. These are not the subject of this review and therefore have not been reported here.

Whilst the designation of the polling stations is a matter for the Returning Officer, it is necessary for the council to review and designate polling districts. All existing parishes and parish wards are designated as polling districts unless any further subdivision is necessary to meet the requirements of the Act.

3.4 Parliamentary constituency boundary changes

The Boundary Commission for England review has impacted the parliamentary constituency arrangements within the geographical area of North Somerset.

The constituencies of North Somerset and Weston-super-Mare both remain wholly within the area of North Somerset, albeit with reduced geographical boundaries. A new constituency of Wells and Mendip Hills now extends into and across the central belt of the North Somerset local authority area.

The proposed polling district code letters have been amended to reflect these constituency changes.

3.5 Changes to polling districts and polling places

The polling districts remain unchanged except for the polling district designation code letters, and approval is sought for the new prefixes proposed to reflect the new parliamentary constituency boundaries as described above.

The majority of polling places are unchanged from the previous review save a small number of proposals to expand the polling place by combining more than one polling district. This is to enable greater flexibility in finding a suitable polling station.

North Somerset Constituency

The revised constituency of North Somerset has been amended by the Parliamentary Boundaries review to a reduced geographical area. The polling district designation codes remain unchanged.

Long Ashton – Long Ashton Ward polling districts NHB and NHC have been combined to a single polling place to offer more flexibility in finding a suitable polling station.

See Appendix A for details.

Wells and Mendip Hills Constituency

This is a new constituency comprising the following areas in North Somerset - Yatton, Kenn, Kingston Seymour, Banwell, Burrington, Churchill, Congresbury, Loxton, Puxton and Winscombe & Sandford - along with additional areas in Somerset. New polling district codes have been designated to reflect these changes.

See Appendix B for details.

Weston-super-Mare Constituency

The revised constituency of Weston-super-Mare has been amended to a reduced geographical area. The polling district designation codes have been revised to reflect these changes

The following polling districts have been combined to a single polling place to offer more flexibility in finding a suitable polling station:

- Weston-super-Mare Kewstoke (WED) and Mid-Worle (WFA)
- Weston-super-Mare Uphill No. 3 (WJC) and No. 4 (WJD)
- Wick St Lawrence East Wick (WLB) and Wick St Lawrence West Wick (WLC)

See Appendix C for details.

4. Consultation

Representations and comments were invited from elected members – MPs, district and parish councillors, local political parties and electors. Comments were sought from the Acting Returning Officer for each of the three parliamentary constituencies as follows:

Constituency	ARO	Submissions
North Somerset	Nicholas Brain	Thank you for the formal opportunity to comment and also for the sharing of information as the proposals were developed. I totally support the proposals with the changes suggested which will address the few issues we have experienced in recent polls.
Wells and Mendip Hills	Duncan Sharkey	The ARO does not have any comments on the changes proposed
Weston-super-Mare	Nicholas Brain	Thank you for the formal opportunity to comment and also for the sharing of information as the proposals were developed. I totally support the proposals with the changes suggested which will address the few issues we have experienced in recent polls.

5. Financial Implications

There is no significant cost element associated with the implementation of these proposals.

Costs

N/A

Funding

N/A

6. Legal Powers and Implications

This review has been carried out to comply with the requirements of the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications for climate change and the environment. These proposals are designed to ensure that polling arrangements are readily accessible to electors without the need for lengthy car journeys wherever possible.

8. Risk Management

In following the Council's risk management process, there are no risks associated with this decision which are scored as high.

9. Equality Implications

A survey of polling stations in relation to compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act is being carried out to align with this compulsory review. An accessibility review has been a requirement of the Elections Act 2022.

10. Corporate Implications

There are no direct corporate implications

11. Options Considered

No other alternative proposals for changes to polling districts and polling places were received under the terms of the review.

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Appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed changes to the North Somerset Constituency
Appendix B – Proposed changes to the Wells and Mendip Hills Constituency
Appendix C – Proposed changes to the Weston-super-Mare Constituency

Background Papers:

North Somerset Council website – Polling districts and polling places review
<https://n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/voting-elections/polling-districts-polling-places-review-2023>

North Somerset Council - Polling District and Polling Places Review 2023

Parliamentary Constituency of North Somerset

(Note that the proposed changes to the existing boundaries are highlighted in orange below. The polling districts in Yatton, including Kenn and Kingston Seymour, will now form part of the Wells and Mendip Hills constituency following the 2023 Parliamentary boundary review).

Existing designatory code letters	Proposed polling district code letters	Description of Parliamentary polling district	Description of polling place	Notes
NAA	NAA	Backwell (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NAB	NAB	Backwell (No.2 - Oatfield)	The parliamentary polling districts of NAB and NRD combined	No change to current polling arrangements
NBA	NBA	Clevedon - East Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NCA	NCA	Clevedon - South Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NDA	NDA	Clevedon - Walton Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NEA	NEA	Clevedon - West Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NFA	NFA	Clevedon - Yeo Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NGA	NGA	Clapton-in-Gordano	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NGB	NGB	Pill & Easton-in-Gordano - Easton-in-Gordano Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NGC	NGC	Portbury	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements

NGD	NGD	Tickenham	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NGE	NGE	Walton-in-Gordano	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NGF	NGF	Weston-in-Gordano	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NHA	NHA	Long Ashton - Leigh Woods Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NHB	NHB	Long Ashton - Long Ashton Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling districts of NHB and NHC combined.	Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Long Ashton ward (2) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
NHC	NHC	Long Ashton - Long Ashton Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling districts of NHB and NHC combined.	Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Long Ashton ward (2) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
NHD	NHD	Wraxall & Failand (Failand)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NHE	NHE	Wraxall & Failand (Wraxall)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NIA	NIA	Nailsea - Golden Valley Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NJA	NJA	Nailsea - West End Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NKA	NKA	Nailsea - Yeo Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements

NLA	NLA	Nailsea - Youngwood Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NMA	NMA	Abbots Leigh	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NMB	NMB	Pill & Easton-in-Gordano - Pill Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NNA	NNA	Portishead - East Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NOA	NOA	Portishead - North Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NPA	NPA	Portishead - South Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NPB	NPB	Portishead - South Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NQA	NQA	Portishead - West Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NQB	NQB	Portishead - West Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NRA	NRA	Barrow Gurney	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NRB	NRB	Dundry	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NRC	NRC	Flax Bourton	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NRD	NRD	Winford - Felton Ward	The parliamentary polling districts of NAB and NRD combined	No change to current polling arrangements
NRE	NRE	Winford - Regil Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NRF	NRF	Winford - Winford Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements

NSA	NSA	Brockley	The parliamentary polling districts of NSA and NSC combined	No change to current polling arrangements
NSB	NSB	Butcombe	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NSC	NSC	Cleeve	The parliamentary polling districts of NSA and NSC combined	No change to current polling arrangements
NSD	NSD	Wrington - North East Ward (Redhill)	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements
NSE	NSE	Wrington - South West Ward	The parliamentary polling district	No change to current polling arrangements

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Parliamentary Constituency of Wells and Mendip Hills

(Note the proposed changes to the existing boundaries are highlighted in orange below).

Existing designatory code letters	Proposed polling district code letters	Description of Parliamentary polling district	Description of polling place	Notes
NTA	SAA	Kenn	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
NTB	SAB	Kingston Seymour	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
NTC	SAC	Yatton - Claverham Ward	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
NTD	SAD	Yatton - Horsecastle Ward	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
NTE	SAE	Yatton - North Ward	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
NTF	SAF	Yatton - South Ward	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WAA	SBA	Banwell	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WAB	SBB	Loxton	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.

WAC	SBC	Winscombe & Sandford (Sandford)	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WAD	SBD	Winscombe & Sandford (Winscombe)	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WBA	SCA	Blagdon	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WBB	SCB	Burrington	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WBC	SCC	Churchill	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WCA	SDA	Congresbury	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WCB	SDB	Puxton	The polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.

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Parliamentary Constituency of Weston-super-Mare

(Note that the proposed changes to the existing boundaries are highlighted in orange below. The polling districts in Banwell, Blagdon, Burrington, Churchill, Congresbury, Loxton, Puxton and Winscombe & Sandford will now form part of the Wells and Mendip Hills constituency following the 2023 Parliamentary boundary review).

Existing designatory code letters	Proposed designatory code letters	Description of Parliamentary polling district	Description of polling place	Notes
WDA	WAA	Bleadon	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WDB	WAB	Hutton	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WDC	WAC	Locking	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WEA	WBA	Weston-super-Mare - South Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WEB	WBB	Weston-super-Mare - South Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WEC	WBC	Weston-super-Mare - South Ward (No.3)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WFA	WCA	Weston-super-Mare - Central Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.

WFB	WCB	Weston-super-Mare - Central Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WGA	WDA	Weston-super-Mare - Hillside Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WGB	WDB	Weston-super-Mare - Hillside Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WGC	WDC	Weston-super-Mare - Hillside Ward (No.3)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WGD	WDD	Weston-super-Mare - Hillside Ward (No.4)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WHA	WEA	Kewstoke (Weston-super-Mare - Kewstoke Ward No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WHB	WEB	Weston-super-Mare - Kewstoke Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WHC	WEC	Weston-super-Mare - Kewstoke Ward (No.3)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WHD	WED	Weston-super-Mare - Kewstoke Ward (No.4)	The parliamentary polling districts of WED and WFA combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Mid Worle Ward (No.1) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.

WIA	WFA	Weston-super-Mare - Mid Worle Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling districts of WED and WFA combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Kewstoke Ward (No.4) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
WIB	WFB	Weston-super-Mare - Mid Worle Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WJA	WGA	Weston-super-Mare - Milton Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WJB	WGB	Weston-super-Mare - Milton Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WKA	WHA	Weston-super-Mare - North Worle Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WKB	WHB	Weston-super-Mare - North Worle Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WLA	WIA	Weston-super-Mare - South Worle Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WLB	WIB	Weston-super-Mare - South Worle Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WMA	WJA	Weston-super-Mare - Uphill Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.

WMB	WJB	Weston-super-Mare - Uphill Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling districts of WJB, WKC and WKD combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WMC	WJC	Weston-super-Mare - Uphill Ward (No.3)	The parliamentary polling districts of WJC and WJD combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Uphill ward (No. 4) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
WMD	WJD	Weston-super-Mare - Uphill Ward (No.4)	The parliamentary polling districts of WJC and WJD combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with Uphill ward (No. 3) to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
WME	WJE	Weston-super-Mare - Uphill Ward (No.5)	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WNA	WKA	Weston-super-Mare - Winterstoke Ward (No.1)	The parliamentary polling districts of WKA and WKB combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WNB	WKB	Weston-super-Mare - Winterstoke Ward (No.2)	The parliamentary polling districts of WKA and WKB combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WNC	WKC	Weston-super-Mare - Winterstoke Ward (No.3)	The parliamentary polling districts of WJB, WKC and WKD combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.

WND	WKD	Weston-super-Mare - Winterstoke Ward (No.4)	The parliamentary polling districts of WJB, WKC and WKD combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WOA	WLA	St Georges	The parliamentary polling district	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency.
WOB	WLB	Wick St Lawrence - East Wick Ward	The parliamentary polling districts of WLB and WLC combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with West Wick ward to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.
WOC	WLC	Wick St Lawrence - West Wick Ward	The parliamentary polling districts of WLB and WLC combined.	Revised polling district code letters to allow for the easy identification of the new parliamentary constituency. Expand the polling place by combining the polling district with East Wick ward to offer more flexibility when finding a suitable polling station.