

Full Council

14 December 2023

Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Choose an item. None

Councillor(s): ALL

Executive Director: J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

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Report Status: Public

Summary: The Returning Officer asks Full Council to consider responses to the consultation on the statutory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations within Dorset and to approve the proposed arrangements. The Council has a duty to carry out a review of polling arrangements within Dorset by 31 January 2025 in accordance with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. It should be noted that any changes will not come into force until 1 February 2024.

Recommendation:

Full Council is asked to agree:

1. That, having undertaken the statutory review, the polling districts, places and stations are as listed in Appendix 1.
2. To delegate the designation of temporary polling places to the Returning Officer

Reason for Recommendations: To enable the Returning Officer to fulfil the statutory responsibility to complete the review, and ensure polling districts,

polling places and polling stations used are accessible, practicable and appropriate.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the council has a duty to carry out a review of polling arrangements within Dorset by 31 January 2025.
- 1.2. In order to comply with this, representations or comments on the council's proposals were invited from all councillors, parish councils, local political parties and organisations with particular expertise in relation to access to premises for people with different forms of disability, as well as electors. The proposals were also sent to members of parliament and acting returning officers for all constituencies within Dorset. The consultation document, setting out the proposals can be found on the council's web pages [here](#).
- 1.3. The principles underlying the council's proposals for polling arrangements were:
 - To retain current arrangements for coterminous polling places and polling districts as far as possible, to minimise disruption to voters
 - To try and identify new polling stations in areas where the existing provision is inadequate
 - To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling stations are accessible to people with disabilities
 - To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - As a result of the recent review of [parish arrangements](#), there are areas where there are changes to the polling districts and the polling station had had to change.

2. Findings

- 2.1. During the period of review and consultation a total of 128 submissions were received. A copy of the submissions showing comments and responses can be found on the council's web pages [here](#).
- 2.2. Following the consultation and after considering the responses received changes have been made in several areas. Some of these are making

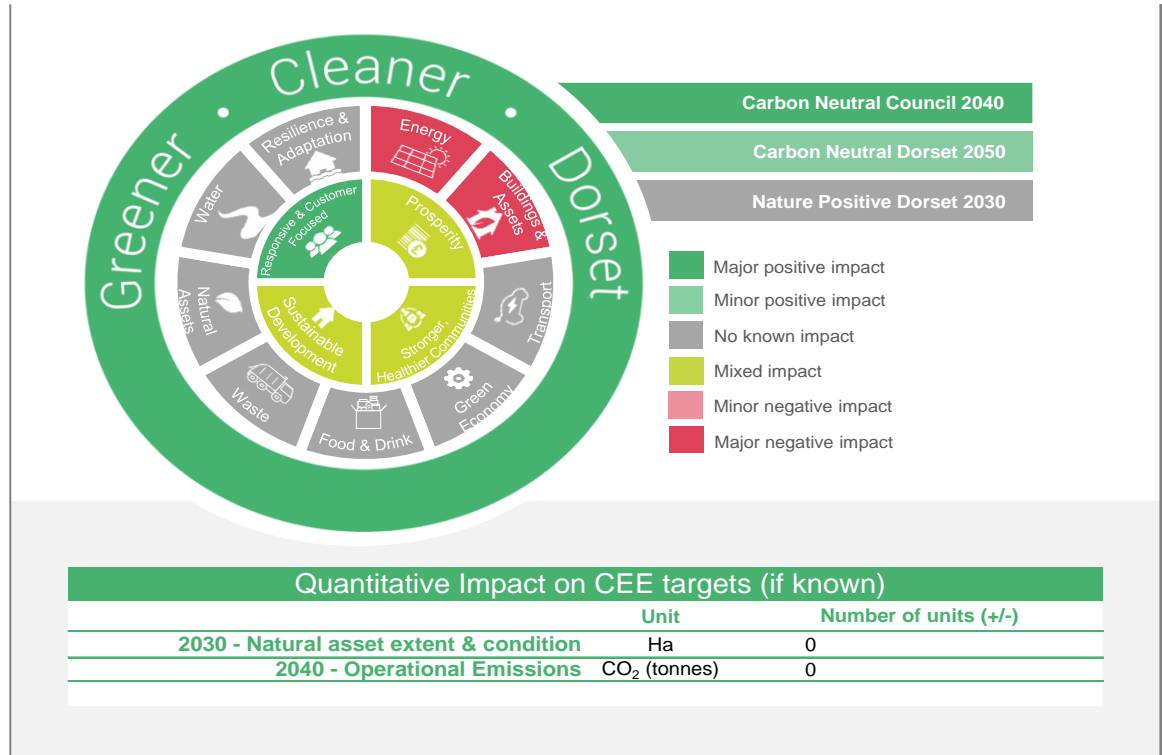
more permanent arrangements for polling stations which may have already been used at previous elections due to buildings no longer being available or suitable. The following District wards have had amendments and can be easily identified by information being included in either Column 2 or Column 4 of Appendix 1:

- Blandford
- Bridport
- Charminster St Mary's
- Chesil Bank
- Chickerell
- Colehill and Wimborne Minster East
- Cranborne Chase
- Dorchester East
- Dorchester Poundbury
- Dorchester West
- Eggardon
- Ferndown South
- Gillingham
- Hill Forts and Upper Tarrants
- Littlemoor and Preston
- Lytchett Matravers and Upton
- Marshwood Vale
- Portland
- Puddletown & Lower Winterborne
- Radipole
- Rodwell
- Sherborne East
- Sherborne West
- Stour and Allen Vale
- Swanage
- Upwey & Broadwey
- West Parley
- West Purbeck
- Westham
- Wimborne Minster
- Winterborne and Broadmayne
- Winterborne North
- Yetminster

3. **Financial Implications:**

There are no additional financial implications, in fact possible minor savings, due to the consolidation of some polling districts, places and stations may arise.

4. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications:**



It should be noted that although Energy and Buildings & Assets are indicating a major negative impact that we shall only be using the buildings for one day of the year and that we do not have control over these buildings.

5. **Well-being and Health Implications:** There are no implications in relation to Well-being and Health.

6. **Other Implications**

None specific

7. **Risk Assessment**

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

8.1. Summary of the impacts:

- Polling stations are provided at a location within a designated polling district that electors are able to get to. We understand that not everyone can get to the polling station due to their personal circumstances and may vote by other means, e.g. post or proxy.
- Doorbells will be provided to the 20 locations that have been identified where this would help with access to polling stations due to its layout.
- Temporary ramps or handrails will be provided to the 4 polling stations that have been identified as needing these to assist access to the building.
- Additional lighting will be provided in some polling stations.
- Where possible, schools are not used to minimise disruption. Where schools have been used, they are able to keep the polling station separate from the school.

The full report is attached as Appendix 3.

9. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations from 1 February 2024 for Dorset Council

Appendix 2: Accessible Impact Assessment & Table of Recommendations

Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment Report

10. **Background Papers**

Background papers for the [Polling District and Station Review](#) and the [Community Governance Review](#) can be found on the council's web pages.

