

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	9 March 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Amendment to Scheme of Delegation
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Democratic Services
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Corporate Director
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Corporate Governance
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	None

## **Executive Summary:**

To enable appropriate delegation arrangements for re-designating Polling Places and Stations outside of a full Polling District Review.

## **Recommendation:**

**To amend the Constitution as follows: -**

**“That authority be delegated to the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer and their deputy to keep Polling Places and Stations under review and amend any such arrangements where there is an operational need prior to the next full review of Polling Places.”**

## **Financial Implications:**

None.

## **Legal Implications:**

None.

## **Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

None.

## **Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

None.

## **Safeguarding Implications:**

None.

## **Impact on the Customer:**

Designation of Polling Places should take account of ease of access by electors.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** A Polling Place is the building or area within which a Polling Station is situated. Electoral Commission guidance states that Polling Places should be designated so that Polling Stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the Polling Place.
- 1.2** The designation of a Polling Place is a matter for Council, whereas decisions about Polling Stations are for the Returning Officer. Under Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983, it is the duty of the Council of each district to designate such Polling Places and keep them under review.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES**

- 2.1** The last full review of Polling Places took place in 2015. A further review was due in 2019 but this did not take place due to three elections taking place that year, one of which was planned; Borough and Parish elections and two of which were not; European elections and a Parliamentary election. This was followed by COVID, the postponement of elections and uncertainties as to when elections would return to normal.
- 2.2** The next full review must take place between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 and needs to take account of the final proposals for revised Parliamentary constituencies which will be in place for the next Parliamentary general election which must be held by 28 January 2025.
- 2.3** With the requirements of the Elections Act 2022, the changes brought about by the Community Governance Review and the availability of venues it has been necessary to make minor changes to Polling Places and Stations without the time being available to conduct a full review. Arguably these could be dealt with under the powers of the Returning Officer or urgency provisions, however it is felt in the interests of openness and transparency that the following provision should be included in the Constitution going forward: -
- “That the Returning Officer/Electoral Returning Officer and their deputy be granted delegated authority to keep Polling Places and Stations under regular review and amend any such arrangements where there is an operational need prior to the next full review of Polling Places.”

## **3.0 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** None.

## **4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

- 4.1** None.

## **5.0 MONITORING**

- 5.1** Polling Places and Stations will be kept under regular review prior to the undertaking of a full review every five years.

**6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**6.1** None.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:** None.