

Polling Districts and Places Review 2019

Consultation Details and Summary of Responses

1. Background:

- 1.1. The Report to Council outlines the background which has led to this review taking place, and notes that a further review will be conducted and concluded during the summer of 2020 to accommodate the changes to electoral boundaries as a result of the implementation of the Order made by The Local Government Boundary Commission which will reduce the number of Isle of Wight Council electoral divisions to 39 and will result in significant changes to some boundaries.
- 1.2. Council is reminded that whilst it is the responsibility of the Council to draw up a scheme of Polling Districts, and to designate geographical Polling Places, it is the personal responsibility of the Returning Officer to designate the physical Polling Stations within those geographical areas.
- 1.3. For the sake of completeness this report includes, in Appendix B, a list of the Polling Stations currently allocated to each Polling District. Circumstances may arise which mean that the Returning Officer has to designate alternative venues as Polling Stations, possibly at short notice.

2. Consultation:

- 2.1. In drawing up these recommendations the following groups or individuals were invited to comment at the outset of the review:
 - Local Government Electors for the Isle of Wight (via an Official Notice in the Isle of Wight County Press on the Council notice board, and via a webpage on iwight.com)
 - Town and Parish Councils and their elected members via an e-mail to all Town and Parish Clerks.
 - Isle of Wight Council members, directly, via e-mail.
 - Local Constituency Political Parties via an e-mail to all Constituency Party contacts.
 - The MP for the Isle of Wight, via e-mail
 - Local organisations who work with those with disabilities, via e-mail.

3. Summary of Responses.

- 3.1. General comments where the responder was content with existing arrangements have been excluded, except where a conflicting opinion has been expressed by others.

- 3.2. Responses were received from the Parish and Town Councils noted below, and from one Local Constituency Party.
4. Parish and Town Councils.
- 4.1. Very few comments were received as a result of the consultation, and of the seven Parish and Town Councils which responded, four were content with current arrangements, and with no further comments to make.
- 4.2. Shalfleet Parish Council cautioned against using a building which had been used once in the recent past, but which is not the default polling station for the area, and there is no intention to use it in the foreseeable future.
- 4.3. Newchurch Parish Council made a suggestion that the polling station be moved to a more central location than the current polling station, and which offers better parking facilities, but made no comment on the polling district boundaries.
- 4.4. Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council commented that they would prefer it if Nettlestone Primary School was not used as a polling station, as closure of the school is unwelcome, and if the school attempts to stay open it can be disruptive.
5. Other Responses.
- 5.1. One Local Constituency Party submitted a response, which made no suggestions for changes to polling districts (given that a further review is planned for 2020), and which raised no objection to the proposed merger of the Nettlestone polling district (R1) and the Seaview polling district (R2).
6. Proposals.
- 6.1. Given the time-limited life of the outcome of this review it was not anticipated that many changes to Polling Districts and Places would be required. The Returning Officer was already aware of the disruption caused to the pupils and staff at Nettlestone Primary school, and welcomes the support of Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council in seeking an alternative.
- 6.2. A suitable venue is available at Seagrove Pavilion, which is the recently rebuilt pavilion serving Seaview Football Club and a large variety of other local clubs and societies. The location of the Pavilion is roughly equidistant between the two existing polling stations and the centre of gravity of their populations, and it also lies on the boundary between the existing Nettlestone polling district (R1) and the Seaview polling district (R2). As a result it is proposed that these two polling districts be merged into one polling district (named "Nettlestone and Seaview"), and that it be served by a single polling station at Seagrove Pavilion.
- 6.3. The local member of the Isle of Wight Council has given verbal support for this proposal, and the Clerk to Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council has confirmed verbally that the Parish Council would also support the proposal. As the pavilion has been only recently constructed it has full disabled access and adjacent parking spaces for disabled drivers.

6.4. As a result, it is recommended:

THAT the Isle of Wight Council adopts the scheme of polling districts and polling places as set out in Appendix B (attached). This resolution is to be effective for the purposes of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held after 1 December 2019. This scheme includes the amalgamation of the Nettlestone (R1) and Seaview (R2) polling districts into one single district.

No further comments were received.