



Exeter City Council

Philip Bostock, Chief Executive

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25 May 2011

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS & POLLING PLACES/STATIONS

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires each local authority to undertake a review of all Parliamentary polling districts and places and to consider access arrangements at polling stations. The review must be carried out every four years. The last review was conducted in 2007.

To this end I am writing to you as a stakeholder, to ask for your assistance in this matter. I would be most grateful, if you have any observations or comments on the current arrangement of polling districts and access to polling stations, that you would let me know by **1 July 2011**.

I have attached a fact sheet, which may help you to consider the issues.

If you have any queries would you please direct them to the Electoral Services Office in the first instance.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Bostock', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip Bostock
Chief Executive

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS & POLLING PLACES/STATIONS 2011

Information Sheet

General Information

- The last full review of Parliamentary polling districts and places, was undertaken in 2007. The Electoral Administration Act of 2006, requires each local authority to undertake a review every four years.
- Since 2007, Exeter's electorate has risen slightly to about 88,000 (up 2%) and the number of properties has grown to 51,600 (up 3%).
- The Parliamentary polling districts and places are replicated for local government elections.
- It should be noted that Ward boundaries cannot be changed.
- The final decision on the situation of polling stations rests with the Returning Officer.
- A **polling district** is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a ward or an electoral division.
- A **polling place** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. In Exeter polling places are the same as the polling district to allow a greater degree of flexibility in deciding where a polling station should be .
- A **polling station** is the actual room or building where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district. The Returning Officer for the particular election must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, and allot the electors to those polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks the most convenient.

List of Current Polling Stations

REGISTER	WARD	POLLING STATION
AA	Alphington	St Andrews Church Hall, Alphington Road
AB	Alphington	Exeter Sea Cadet HQ, Canal Banks, Haven Road
AC	Alphington	Westexe Technology College, Hatherleigh Road
AD	Alphington	Alphington Sports Club, Church Road
AE	Alphington	Alphington Village Hall, Ide Lane
BA	Cowick	Buddle Lane Hall, Merrivale Road
BB	Cowick	Bowhill, Dunsford Road
CA	Duryard	University of Exeter, Common Room, Lopes Hall, St Germans Road
CB	Duryard	University of Exeter, Common Rm, Moberly House, Lwr Argyle Rd
DA	Exwick	Redhills Primary School, Landhayes Road
DB	Exwick	Exeter Civil Service Club, Exwick Road
DC	Exwick	Exwick Community Centre, Kinnerton Way *
EA	Heavitree	Scout Hut, South Lawn Terrace *
EB	Heavitree	South West Baptist Assoc, Wonford Street
FA	Mincinglake	Beacon Heath Church, King Arthur's Road
FB	Mincinglake	Whipton Community Hall, Pinhoe Road
FC	Mincinglake	The Knight Club, Beacon Lane
GA	Newtown	Belmont Chapel, Western Way
GB	Newtown	School of Education, College Road (St Luke's)
GC	Newtown	Fountain Community Education Centre, St James Road
HA	Pennsylvania	Stoke Hill Infant & Nursery School, Stoke Hill *
HB	Pennsylvania	Sylvania Community Hall, Mincinglake Valley Park
JA	Pinhoe	Mobile Station, Orwell Garth
JB	Pinhoe	Trinity Community Centre, Arena Park, Beacon Heath
JC	Pinhoe	The Hall Church, Main Road, Pinhoe
JD	Pinhoe	Pinhoe C of E School, Harrington Lane
KA	Polsloe	Ladysmith Junior School, Pretoria Road, (Parent Room)
KB	Polsloe	St Mark's Church Hall, St Mark's Avenue
KC	Polsloe	Baptist Church Hall, Pinhoe Road
LA	Priory	100 Club, Wear Barton Road
LB	Priory	St Luke's Church Rooms, School Lane
LC	Priory	Wonford Methodist Church Hall, Burnthouse Lane
LD	Priory	Wynstream Primary School, Burnthouse Lane
MA	St. David's	Community Room, 66 Weaver's Court, Shilhay
MB	St. David's	Wesley Room, Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street
MC	St. David's	St. David's Church, Queen's Terrace (off Hele Road)
NA	St. James	St. Sidwell's C of E School, York Road *
NB	St. James	Community Room, York House, Longbrook Street
PA	St. Leonard's	Abbeville Community Room, Abbeville Close
PB	St. Leonard's	Church Hall, Roberts Road
PC	St. Leonard's	St Leonards Church Centre, Topsham Road
PD	St. Leonard's	Victoria Park Tennis Club, Lyndhurst Road
QA	St. Loye's	The South West MS Centre, West Grange, Clyst Heath
QB	St. Loye's	Walter Daw Primary School, Woodwater Lane
QC	St. Loye's	St. Peter's High School, Quarry Lane

REGISTER	WARD	POLLING STATION
QD	St. Loye's	Clyst Heath Nursery & Community School, Royal Crescent
RA	St. Thomas	Montgomery Primary School, Manor Road
RB	St. Thomas	Exeter Karate Centre, Church Road
RC	St. Thomas	West Exe Childrens Centre, Cowick Street
SA	Topsham	Matthews Hall, Fore Street *
SB	Topsham	Community Room, Grandisson Court
TA	Whipton Barton	Hamlin House, Hamlin Gardens
TB	Whipton Barton	Community Centre, Bodley Close
TC	Whipton Barton	Community Room, Russet House, Russet Avenue
TD	Whipton Barton	Community Room, Rennes House, Vaughan Road*

* Double station

Current Arrangement of Polling Districts

See attached map(s).

(If maps are not attached but copies are required please contact the Electoral Services Office).

What the Rules say*.

- (a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- (b) the authority must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled;
- (c) the authority must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place..
- (d) the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate any area wholly or partly outside the district;
- (e) the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

**(Electoral Administration Act 2006(pt 4)(18B)(4))*

Please also note that the Council must publish any correspondence submitted in respect of this review.

Access

All polling stations should have access facilities for disabled electors. This includes wheelchair users. There are various building regulations which determine how adaptations can be made. It is not always possible for the owners of buildings to make permanent structural changes. Where permanent facilities are not possible, Electoral Services try to make temporary provision, usually by means of a portable ramp. However, it must be remembered that, on occasion these ramps can cause a hazard and thus it is not always a practical solution.

A polling station should be within reasonable walking distance for most electors.

Practical Considerations

Availability

There is no such thing as a purpose built polling station. We have to adapt and use the buildings which are available in the locality. Whilst regulations permit the Returning Officer to use schools, the owners of other buildings (Church halls, sports clubs etc.) have no such obligation.

Suitability

When selecting a polling station there are some basic criteria which need to be considered.

- Geographically central for the majority of the electorate.
- Appropriate for democratic use.
- Health and safety arrangements
- Enough useable space.
- Exclusive use.
- Access (including parking)
- Welfare facilities for staff
- Cost

Topography

Considerations such as steep hills and other natural boundaries, railway lines, busy main roads etc. need to be taken into account.

Other Factors

Use of Schools

The current policy is that schools should not be used, where there is a reasonable and viable alternative.

Overall Number of Polling Stations

The number of polling stations in Exeter was relatively constant over the decade prior to the 2007 review, when two new polling stations were added. Over the past four years the level of new developments has slowed. However there are still some areas where new residential properties are beginning to become occupied and will do so over the next few years.

There are no legislative limits on the number of polling stations an authority can provide.

Timetable

Publication of Notice of the Review – 26 May 2011

Consultation period - 27 May – 8 July 2011

Publication of the Returning Officers representations – within 30 days of receipt

Report to Executive Committee – 4 October 2011

Submit to Council – 18 October 2011

Publication of Review Report – 25 October 2011

Implementation of report recommendations – from Register of Electors published on 1 December 2011, to take effect for any subsequent election and for the City Council elections due 3 May 2012

Particular Known Concerns

There are some situations which are already known and these are shown below, with a suggestion where solutions may have already been considered. Additionally, some questions are raised for consideration and comment.

1. Alphington Ward – A new polling station was introduced at the Exeter City Council elections and National AV Referendum in May 2011. This was due to the closure of Willey's Athletic and Sports Club. It is not currently proposed to change the boundaries of the polling district.
2. Heavitree Ward – The only available polling station in polling district EB is actually slightly outside of the Ward boundary. The building currently used is suitable in most aspects but it is not geographically well situated. There are currently no known viable alternatives.
3. St. Loye's Ward – The QA polling district is fairly small in terms of electors. The numbers of electors in the neighbouring QD district appears to have stabilised. On this basis it would be possible to absorb QA into QD and use the existing polling station (Clyst Heath Nursery and Community Primary School) in Royal Crescent. Although it may be marginally less convenient for the electors who currently use the South West MS Centre.
4. Pennsylvania Ward – The Head teacher and the School Governors, along with some of the parents, have vigorously expressed their desire for Stoke Hill Infant School (polling district HA) not to be used as a polling station. There are two alternative buildings in the area, Toronto House in Prince Charles Road and St. James Church Centre in Mount Pleasant Road. Both of these buildings have been designated as polling places in the past on different ward arrangements and Toronto House was discontinued due to access difficulties. Additionally Stoke Hill Junior School has been used but was discontinued for the same reasons as those now being cited in respect of the First School. Should either Toronto House or St. James Church now be considered for inclusion within the designation of polling places for HA?
5. Pinhoe Ward – The current mobile polling station in Orwell Garth (JA) is unsatisfactory and presents a number of logistical and access problems for disabled electors, along with significant costs. The only known alternative is Willowbrook School. It is suggested that this is adopted as the polling station for JA.
6. Whipton Barton Ward – The current polling station at Rennes House is located on one side of a fairly large polling district and the room itself just about accommodates the number of electors allocated to this polling station. If a venue could be found, would an additional polling district/polling station in the area east of Vaughan Road help to improve accessibility?
7. Topsham Ward - Significant development has taken place on the site of the Old Royal Navy Stores over the past few years and is expected to continue in the next few years. These electors currently have to go to the polling station at Matthews Hall in the centre of Topsham. It is suggested that a new polling district is created, in the area between Rydon Lane and the M5. However, this is only feasible if a polling station site can be found. It is suggested that initially Topsham Town FC may be able to provide a room at their clubhouse until such time as a community building is available in the area of greatest development.

Point of Contact

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Exeter City Council
Civic Centre
Paris Street
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electoral.services@exeter.gov.uk

www.exeter.gov.uk

List of Consultees

The (Acting) Returning Officer, Exeter City Council (Exeter Constituency)
The (Acting) Returning Officer, East Devon District Council (East Devon Constituency)
The Returning Officer, Devon County Council
All Exeter City Councillors
All Devon County Councillors for Exeter
Ben Bradshaw MP (Exeter Constituency)
Hugo Swire MP (East Devon Constituency)
Exeter Labour Party
Exeter Conservative Association
Exeter Liberal Democrats
Exeter Liberal Party
Exeter Green Party
Exeter UKIP
East Devon Labour Party
East Devon Conservative Association
East Devon Liberal Party
East Devon Liberal Democrats
East Devon Green Party
East Devon UKIP
Age UK Exeter
RNID South West
Devon County Association for the Blind
Exeter Society for the Blind
Living Options Devon
St.Loye's Foundation, Exeter
Scope