Meeting: Council **Date:** 5 December 2018

Wards Affected: All Wards in Torbay

Report Title: Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2018

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? 1 February 2019

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Anne-Marie Bond, Director of Corporate Services, 01803 207160; Anne-Marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

1.1 Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission in 2017 of the electoral arrangements for Torbay and the recommendations made by the Commission, the local authority is required to undertake a review of all of its polling districts (the geographical areas created by the sub-division of a ward or Parliamentary constituency), its polling places (the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer) and its polling stations. This report sets out the recommendations of the Constitution Working Party for a revised polling district and polling station scheme.

2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments

2.1 The Council is required to review Torbay's polling districts, polling places and polling stations following the introduction of new boundaries as a result of the Local Boundary Review undertaken in 2017.

2.2 The proposals contained in this report will result in some minor changes to resourcing of polling stations, but these are not significant.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 That the revised polling district and polling station scheme, as set out at Appendix 1 be approved.

3.2 That delegation be given to the Returning Officer to make any amendments to the scheme which may be required to facilitate the running of elections.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1:	Proposed revisions to the polling district and polling place scheme.
Appendices 2 - 17:	Ward maps detailing recommending polling district boundaries for Barton with Watcombe, Churston with Galmpton, Clifton with Maidenway, Cockington with Chelston, Collaton St Mary, Ellacombe, Furzeham with Summercombe, Goodrington with Roselands, King's Ash, Preston, Roundham with Hyde, Shiphay, St Marychurch, St Peter's with St Mary's, Tormohun and Wellswood.
Appendix 18:	Proposed roads/properties to be moved from one polling district to another.
Appendix 19:	The Acting Returning Officer's recommendations regarding polling stations.

Background Documents

Electoral Administration Act 2013

https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/polling-districts-review/

Section 1: Background Information	
1.	**What is the proposal / issue?** Local Authorities are required by law to divide their area into polling districts, to designate polling places/polling stations for those districts and to keep the polling districts and polling places under review. The last comprehensive review of polling districts and polling stations was carried out in 2014 with interim reviews carried out in 2010 and 2011. Wherever possible the polling districts have remained true to existing arrangements, thus avoiding too much change for the sake of change. In addition, the majority of the proposed polling stations are the ones currently used as it was felt that the current locations serve their respective polling districts sufficiently. Furthermore, it is not always possible to identify suitable alternatives especially in predominantly residential areas. The review can only address polling issues within the current ward structure of the Borough. It cannot make changes to the ward (or Borough) boundaries. Following the Constitution Working Party meeting held on 18 July 2018 a consultation on the Officer proposals was held. Following the consultation, the recommendations were considered and approved by the Working Party at their meeting of the 31 October 2018.
2.	**What is the current situation?** Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission of the electoral arrangements for Torbay and the recommendations made by the Commission, the local authority was required to undertake a review of all of its polling districts (the geographical areas created by the sub-division of a ward or Parliamentary constituency), its polling places (the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer) and its polling stations. The changes brought about the by review have affected the boundaries of the existing 15 wards, some considerably, and subsequently the geography of the polling districts within those wards. The Boundary Commission recommended that: • Torbay should be represented by 36 councillors, the same number as there are now; • Torbay should have 16 wards, one more than there are now; and • The boundaries of all wards should change, none will stay the same. The recommendations were laid before Parliament in June 2018 and approved.

	The Constitution Working Party met on 2 occasions to review the proposals for the revised polling districts, places and stations. Membership over these meetings of the Working Party (including substitutions) included: Councillors Hill (Chairman), Darling (S), Ellery, Sanders, Thomas (D), Tolchard, Tyerman. The Working Party's recommendations are set out above.
3.	**What options have been considered?** The Working Party discussed a number of options arising from the consultation feedback.
4.	**How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan?** The changes proposed to the polling districts and polling stations arise from statutory requirements. The proposals assist with the Corporate Plan principle of using resources to best effect.
5.	**How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?** No direct impact.
6.	**How does this proposal tackle deprivation?** No direct impact.
7.	**How does this proposal tackle inequalities?** The proposals aim to tackle inequalities by ensuring that the polling stations are accessible to all electors in terms of location and physical access.
8.	**How does the proposal impact on people with learning disabilities?** No direct impact on people with learning disabilities.
9.	**Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?** Electors within Torbay. Public consultation ran from 27 July until 7 September 2018 and the following people and organisations were invited to respond to the consultation: • The Acting Returning Officer, Torbay Council • The Acting Returning Officer, South Hams District Council

	• All Torbay Councillors and the Mayor of Torbay • Brixham Town Councillors • Kevin Foster MP • Sarah Wollaston MP • Torbay Conservative Association • Torbay Liberal Democrats • Torbay Labour Party • Torbay Green Party • Torbay UKIP • Age UK Torbay • Action on Hearing Loss (former RNID South West) • RNIB South West • Scope • Action for Blind People • South West Multiple Sclerosis Centre • Torbay Disability Information Service • Speaking Out in Torbay (SPOT) • Shopmobility • Torbay electors • Brixham Community Partnership • Chelston, Cockington & Livermead Community Partnership • Churston, Galmpton & Broadsands Community Partnership • Torre & Upton Community Partnership • Wellswood & Torwood Community Partnership
10.	**How will you propose to consult?** Consultation has already taken place on the proposals. The consultation ran from 27 July until 7 September 2018. The documents comprised of the officer proposals and ward maps. These documents were published on the Council's website and circulated to the people and stakeholders listed in section 9.

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment	
11.	**What are the financial and legal implications?** There will be minimal additional costs to the Council associated with resourcing the new polling stations due to an increase in polling districts from 68 to 70. For national elections these costs will be covered by Central Government. The costs include the need to employ additional staff in those polling stations where there are cross parliamentary boundaries.
12.	**What are the risks?** Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places: • Each parish in England is to be a separate polling district • The Council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors • The polling place must be in an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district) Failure to implement the proposals will be a breach of this legislation. Some electors will vote at a different polling station to where they are used to. However, all affected electors will be written to following the conclusion of the polling review and messages will be added to poll cards.
13.	**Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012** There is no additonal procurement of goods required to be made under these proposals
14.	**What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?** Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission of the electoral arrangements for Torbay and the recommendations made by the Commission, the local authority was required to undertake a review of all of its polling districts, polling places and polling stations. The Constitution Working Party meeting held on 18 July 2018 considered the consultation approach and a consultation on the Officer proposals was then held. The results of the consultation considered by the Working Party at their

	meeting of the 31 October 2018 and their recommendations are set out above.
15.	**What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?** Responses to the consultation were published on the Council's website at https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/polling-districts-review/ https://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/11956/south-hams-aro-report.docx • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that Dorchester Grove should be included in the AB polling district of the Barton with Watcombe ward rather than the proposed AE polling district. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that Salisbury Avenue, Winchester Avenue, Truro Avenue, Gloucester Close, Lichfield Avenue, Horace Road and Lincoln Green also form part of Polling District AB, or alternatively that they form a separate Polling District of their own - possibly then taking advantage of the potential for polling station facilities (including ample parking) at the nearby Barton Baptist Church. **Response** the combined electorate of Salisbury Avenue, Winchester Avenue, Truro Avenue, Gloucester Close, Lichfield Avenue, Horace Road and Lincoln Green is 821, increasing the electorate for the AB polling district to 2726 which exceeds the Electoral Commission's recommendation of 2500 electors. The consultees suggestion to use Barton Baptist Church would result in the polling station being outside the polling district. The alternative is to combine the existing WC and WD polling districts to form polling district AE. The electorate falls within the Electoral Commission's recommendation. The proposed polling arrangements for AE is to use Acorn Centre as a double polling station as the electors in the WC polling district already vote here. These issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Email from Elizabeth Tucker, on behalf of the Acting Returning Officer for the Totnes Constituency – requested that electors in BCA should go to St Georges Hall rather than the proposed Mobile Station at Davies Avenue. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that some electors in Colley End Road, Treesdale Close and Swincombe Close should vote at the Old Monastery rather than Paignton College (Waterleat Road campus).

	Response the properties concerned fall under the Totnes Constituency for Parliamentary elections and are therefore unable to vote at a Torbay Constituency polling station (which the Old Monastery is). These issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that Mount Pleasant Road be included in the FB polling district rather than the proposed FA polling district. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that Furzeham Park be included in the GE polling district rather than the proposed GF polling district. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Councillor Alan Tyerman – requested that electors in the HV polling district vote at the leisure centre, therefore making the leisure centre a double polling station. • **Response** the viability of this proposal was looked into, however, the current location of the polling station (a squash court) within the leisure centre would not be able to accommodate a double polling station. The Leisure Centre does not have a suitable additional room available. Feedback was invited from the Presiding Officer usually located at the leisure centre, indicated that the existing location only just copes with the current amount of electors. Therefore the proposal to merge the two current polling districts of IC and ID to make a single polling district is not viable. Whilst the combined electorate (2433) would be within the Electoral Commission's recommendations, elector turnout for both of the current polling districts are high and we would therefore expect to see large numbers of voters attending a polling station which already struggles with an electorate of 1219. These issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Email from Elizabeth Tucker, on behalf of the Acting Returning Officer for the Totnes Constituency requested that electors in IAA vote at the Catholic Church Rooms, Cecil Road. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that voters in Enfield Road should be included in the MF polling district rather than the proposed MD polling district. **Response** these issues have been addressed in the recommendations.

	• Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that the whole of Douglas Avenue be included in the NB polling district. **Response** this has been addressed in the recommendations. • Torbay Liberal Democrats – requested that the boundary line between PB and PD be redrawn so that a property on Newton Road is included within the correct polling district. **Response** this has been addressed in the recommendations. • Councillor James O'Dwyer – suggested a mobile station at Cary Gardens or at the Terrace Car Park or St John the Apostle Church as a polling station. • Councillor Nick Bye – suggested that Torquay Museum be used a polling station for the electors in PF or alternatively St John the Apostle Church. **Response** a further review was undertaken following the comments received through the consultation. The Council is trying to avoid the use of additional mobile stations as they are costly and logistically difficult to manage. The use of St Johns Church was also looked into but the venue was deemed to be unsuitable for accessibility. Torquay Museum falls outside of the Tormohun ward. Torquay Harbour Office is recommended as the polling station for PF. This has been addressed in the recommendations.
16.	**Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions** Yes. See section 15 for details. For most electors, they will be voting at their usual polling station, with some electors voting at a different polling station to where they are used to. All affected electors will be written to following the conclusion of the polling review and messages will be added to poll cards.

Equality Impacts

17.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
	Positive Impact	**Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions**	**Neutral Impact**
Older or younger people			There is no differential impact
People with caring Responsibilities			There is no differential impact
People with a disability		An accessibility assessment is made on all polling stations and reasonable adjustments made where required.	
Women or men			There is no differential impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) *(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)*			There is no differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			There is no differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			There is no differential impact
People who are transgendered			There is no differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			There is no differential impact

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			There is no differential impact
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			There is no differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			There is no differential impact
16	**Cumulative Impacts – Council wide** (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	No applicable for this proposal		
17	**Cumulative Impacts – Other public services** (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	No applicable for this proposal		