

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):

Name of Report/Proposal/Strategy:	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2014		
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Since the Equality Act 2010 came into force the council has continued to be committed to ensuring we provide services that meet the diverse needs of our community as well as ensure we are an organisation that is sensitive to the needs of individuals within our workforce. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of proposed decisions on the community.

This EIA will evidence that you have fully considered the impact of your proposal / strategy and carried out appropriate consultation with key stakeholders. The EIA will allow Councillors and Senior Officers to make informed decisions as part of the council's decision-making process.

Relevance Test – ‘A Proportionate Approach’

Not all of the proposals or strategies we put forward will be ‘relevant’ in terms of the actual or potential impact on the community in relation to equality and vulnerable groups. For instance, a report on changing a supplier of copier paper may not require an EIA to be completed whereas a report outlining a proposal for a new community swimming pool or a report proposing a closure of a service would.

Therefore before completing the EIA please answer the following questions. If you answer ‘yes’ to any of the questions below you must complete a full EIA.

1)	Does this report relate to a key decision?	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>
2)	Will the decision have an impact (i.e. a positive or negative effect/change) on any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community (including specific impacts upon the vulnerable or equality groups) • Our Partners • The Council (including our structure, ‘knock-on’ effects for other business units, our reputation, finances, legal obligations or service provision) 	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>

Section 1: Purpose of the proposal/strategy/decision

No	Question	Details
1.	Clearly set out the purpose of the proposal	<p><i>Outline exactly what the proposal is / whether there is any change including reasons for the change. List the key objectives of the proposal/strategy.</i></p> <p>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 Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. This must take place between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015. The last comprehensive review of polling districts and polling stations was carried out in 2007 with interim reviews carried out in 2010 and 2011. In order to complete the review in time to make the changes for the next published register on 1 December 2014 the review commenced on 16 June 2014.</p>
2.	Who is intended to benefit / who will be affected?	<p><i>Who are the key stakeholders / which individuals / specific groups may benefit from the proposal or who will be most affected?</i></p> <p>Electors within Torbay</p>
3.	What is the intended outcome?	<p><i>It is important to identify the specific outcomes that this proposal intends to deliver.</i></p> <p>To ensure that all polling stations are suitable for all types of elections in the future and comply with the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.</p>

Section 2: Equalities, consultation and engagement

Torbay Council has a moral obligation as well as a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The **equalities, consultation and engagement** section ensures that, as a council, we take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty at an early stage and provide evidence to ensure that we fully consider the impact of our decisions / proposals on the Torbay community.

Evidence, consultation and engagement

No	Question	Details
4.	Have you considered the available evidence?	<p><i>Consider data and research already available locally and nationally. Your assessment should be under-pinned by up-to-date and reliable information about the different groups the proposal is likely to affect. For instance, population profile, satisfaction data, deprivation statistics and how this helps to build a picture around your proposal.</i></p> <p>Background research was undertaken in respect of future demographics and growth population in Torbay using local statistics produced by the Council and information from the Local Plan.</p>

No	Question	Details
5.	<p>How have you consulted on the proposal?</p>	<p><i>Have you carried out any consultation on your proposal and if so how? Focus groups / survey / events? Remember that it may be important to also consult on any alternative options. Also include who you have consulted with and if applicable which specific groups you have consulted with (i.e. groups who may be specifically affected by your proposal, specific equality or hard to reach groups).</i></p> <p>Public consultation was undertaken between 14 June and 29 August via the Council's website at http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/getinvolved/elections/pollingreview.htm with relevant statutory notices being placed outside Council buildings such as Torquay Town Hall. The following groups/people were consulted via email and invited to give their views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Adrian Sanders 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

No	Question	Details
6.	Outline the key findings	<p data-bbox="562 116 2130 212"><i>Include feedback on your proposal including where you have consulted on any alternative options. Also include response rates, number of attendees to events / focus groups, outline of specific interest groups consulted. Use bullet points to summarise the key conclusions.</i></p> <p data-bbox="562 252 2074 395">Responses to the consultation were published on the Council's website at http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/getinvolved/elections/pollingreview/consultationresponsetorbay.htm and http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/getinvolved/elections/pollingreview/consultationresponsetotnes.htm and are summarised below together with the proposed response:</p> <ul data-bbox="573 440 2130 767" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 440 2040 517">• Report of the Acting Returning Officer for Torbay concerning the existing arrangements in the Totnes Constituency – supporting the issues raised in the consultation and proposed solutions; <li data-bbox="573 564 2130 767">• Email from Liz Tucker, Electoral Administrator for South Hams District Council on behalf of the Acting Returning Officer for the Totnes Constituency suggesting that polling districts AD and ADA should be amalgamated into one polling district AD and polling districts AE and AEA should be amalgamated into one polling district AE. She has also requested that procedures are put in place for St George's Hall, Paignton to ensure that no cross-over of ballot papers should occur between the two Parliamentary constituencies. <p data-bbox="618 815 1630 847">Response these issues have been addressed in the recommendations.</p> <ul data-bbox="573 890 2074 967" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 890 2074 967">• Councillor Ellery – requesting moving the St Marys Hall polling station to St Marys Park and moving the Sea Anglers Polling Station in Castor Road to the Brixham Hospital site. <p data-bbox="618 1015 1630 1046">Response these issues have been addressed in the recommendations.</p> <ul data-bbox="573 1090 2107 1286" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 1090 2040 1166">• Report of the Acting Returning Officer for Torbay concerning the existing arrangements in the Torbay Constituency – supporting the issues raised in the consultation and proposed solutions; <li data-bbox="573 1214 2107 1286">• Homelands Primary School – requesting that they no longer be used as a polling station due to disruption to the children.

No	Question	Details
		<p>Response this has been addressed in the recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Kingscote – suggesting the willow tree pub becomes a double polling station for polling districts TA and TB. <p>Response the Council has not been able to secure the room adjacent to the Willow Tree pub for community use and therefore this is no longer a suitable venue for a polling station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors Kingscote and Hernandez – suggesting a double polling station for polling districts TA and TB and that the polling station for this polling district be Sainsburys supermarket at the Willows. <p>Response having visited Sainsburys supermarket the only suitable space would be to section off an area in the cafe and use the exit located in the centre of the store as an entrance and exit to the polling station. It was hoped that we could use the door to the side of the cafe as an entrance to the polling station, although this is not possible as it is a fire door and must be kept shut at all times. We also explored using the exit in the middle of the building but this was not suitable for use as an entrance. Otherwise electors would need to come in the main entrance and walk past all the tills and cafe to get to the area to be used as a polling station which is not suitable. Marks & Spencer and DFS were also approached but had no suitable space or were not willing to allocate space in their store for use as a polling station. Due to the new development at Beechfield Avenue and number of new electors in polling district TA it would not be appropriate to have a double polling station for TA and TB (approximately 1500 electors voted at the last General Election for these two polling districts). Also the new venues being explored for polling district TB would not be large enough to accommodate two polling stations. It is therefore proposed to put a mobile station in the car park near to DFS similar to the one used in the past outside Comet. This has been addressed in the recommendations.</p>
7.	<p>What amendments may be required as a result of the consultation?</p>	<p><i>Has feedback from the consultation and engagement process identified any changes required to the proposal? Have you had to alter your decision and look at alternative options?</i></p> <p>Please see responses above under each consultation response.</p>

Positive and negative equality impacts

No	Question	Details		
8.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups	<i>It is not enough to state that a proposal will affect everyone equally. There should be more in-depth consideration of available evidence to see if particular groups are more likely to be affected than others – use the table below. You should also consider workforce issues. If you consider there to be no positive or negative impacts use the 'neutral' column to explain why.</i>		
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
	All groups in society generally	Yes, the review has resulted in the designation of polling districts and polling places/stations that meet the main principles in the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in terms of accessibility and location		
	Older or younger people	Yes, the review has resulted in the designation of polling districts and polling places/stations that meet the main principles in the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in terms of accessibility and location		
	People with caring responsibilities	Yes, the review has resulted in the designation of polling districts and polling places/stations that meet the main principles in the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in terms of accessibility and location		
	People with a disability	Yes, the review has resulted in the designation of polling districts and polling places/stations that meet the main principles in the requirements		

No	Question	Details	
		of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in terms of accessibility and location	
	Women or men		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	<i>(please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal, although some of the venues are within churches or church buildings
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	People who are transgendered		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
	Socio-economic impacts (including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		Yes – the proposals treat every elector as equal
9.	Is there scope for your proposal to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and / or foster good relations?	<p><i>The council is committed to ensuring that we meet the diverse needs of our community. As part of the Equality Act there is a <u>general duty as well as our moral obligation</u> where we are required to have ‘due regard’ to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. Outline how your proposal meets the general duty.</i></p> <p>Polling stations are all assessed to ensure, where possible, they have suitable disabled access which also helps elderly and other electors within limited mobility to be able to vote in a dignified way.</p>	

Section 3: Steps required to manage the potential impacts identified

No	Action	Details
10.	Summarise any positive impacts and how they will be realised most effectively?	<p><i>Outline any positive impacts that you have identified relating to equalities and how these impacts will be realised most effectively. What ways can the positive impacts be maximised? Use the action plan (after section 5) to outline actions, responsible officers and timescales.</i></p> <p>By ensuring that the polling stations are accessible with enable electors to vote in a dignified way.</p>
11.	Summarise any negative impacts and how these will be managed?	<p><i>Outline any negative impacts that you have identified relating to equalities and how these impacts will be managed / monitored so that they are reduced / eliminated or mitigated. What ways can the negative impact be minimised? Use the action plan (after section 5) to outline actions, responsible officers and timescales.</i></p> <p>N/A</p>

Section 4: Recommended course of action

No	Action	Details
12.	State a recommended course of action	<p><i>Clearly identify an option and justify reasons for this decision. The following four outcomes are possible from an assessment (and more than one may apply to a single proposal). Please select from the 4 outcomes below and justify reasons for your decision - If '3' please provide full justification :</i></p> <p>Outcome 1: No major change required - EIA has not identified any potential for adverse impact in relation to equalities and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. All steps have been taken when identifying new polling stations and reviewing existing polling stations to ensure that they meet the needs of all electors and are located within or close to the vicinity of the polling district they serve and are accessible.</p>

Section 5: Monitoring and action plan

No	Action	Details
13.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of your proposals	<p><i>The full impact of decisions will only be known once it is introduced. Identify arrangements for reviewing the actual impact of proposals once they have been implemented. Please also use the action plan below.</i></p> <p>Monitor effectiveness of polling stations at elections on 7 May 2015.</p>

Please use the action plan below to summarise all of the key actions, responsible officers and timescales as a result of this impact assessment

Action plan

Please detail below any actions you need to take:

No.	Action	Reason for action / contingency	Resources	Responsibility	Deadline date
1	Monitor feedback from polling staff and electors at elections on 7 May 2015	To monitor the effectiveness of the replacement and combined polling stations	Complaints form and feedback forms	Cath Hayden	29 May 2015