

COMMITTEE :	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE:	13 FEBRUARY 2020
TITLE:	REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES
PURPOSE	TO APPROVE THE RESULTS OF THE REVIEW SO THAT THEY CAN BE PRESENTED TO THE FULL COUNCIL
AUTHOR:	IWAN EVANS – HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR NIA JEFFREYS, CORPORATE SUPPORT, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL SERVICES MEMBER

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 To approve the results of the review of polling districts and polling places in the Arfon and Dwyfor Meirionnydd parliamentary constituencies following a consultation period, for submission to Full Council for a decision.

2. REASON FOR SEEKING A DECISION

2.1 Local Authorities are required to divide their areas into polling districts for parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 the Council must also undertake a full review of these arrangements every five years.

3. Background

3.1 A Polling District is the area within the electoral area, ward or district within which a polling place can be designated, which is convenient for voters. A Polling Place is the building or area in which Polling Stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.

3.2 As far as is reasonable and practicable the authority must designate places that are accessible to electors with disabilities. However, the authority must consider the needs of all electors and should not designate a place that is so far away from most electors in the polling district as to be inconvenient for them to reach it.

3.3 It should be noted that the review of polling places is a continuous process and that there is nothing to prevent changes being made at any time before the next statutory review. The situation will therefore continue to be monitored, and any changes will be made in consultation with the local member.

3.4 Members will be aware of the proposed changes to local government electoral arrangements following the recent review by the Local Democracy and

Boundary Commission for Wales. When these changes are implemented a further review of the polling arrangements will be required in advance of the 2022 Local Government Elections.

4. The Review

4.1 As part of the review, a public notice of the review was published, together with details of the current polling districts and polling stations, and copies were sent to potential interested parties, such as councillors, town and community councils, political parties and other stakeholders. The representations of the county's Access Groups were also sought, as persons with particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. When contacting these parties it was explained that it would be helpful, where concerns are expressed about a particular polling station, that suggestions are also made for an alternative venue.

4.2 The (Acting) Returning officer must comment during any review on the polling stations. These comments were included with the information published and sent out and can be seen in the Appendix.

5. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

5.1 Six responses were received to the consultation. Concerns were put forward in relation to two polling stations as they were not ideal from the point of view of access for disabled electors. These were the polling station at Tal-y Bont (Capel Bethlehem) and Ysgol Santes Helen, Caernarfon. However those who raised the concerns also acknowledged the current lack of suitable alternatives.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 That the Committee considers the content of the report and notes whether it is willing to accept the results of the review as set out in the Appendix, and also whether it wishes to submit any observations on its content to the Council.