

Comments received and the (Acting) Returning Officer's response

BISHOP AUCKLAND CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Barnard Castle West</p> <p>Polling District: BAOB - Middleton-In-Teesdale</p>	<p>Polling Station - Middleton in Teesdale Nursery and Primary School, Town End, Middleton in Teesdale, Barnard Castle, Co Durham, DL12 0TG</p>	<p>Please remove from List - Business Manager</p>	<p>A review of the polling district has been conducted. No suitable alternative venues are available.</p> <p>I must recommend continued use of the school as a a polling station.</p> <p>Use of Schools legislation: The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Bishop Auckland Town</p> <p>Polling District: BABC - Central 5</p>	<p>Polling Station - St Annes CE Primary School (3123), Warwick Road, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 6LS</p>	<p>"Disabled access is via the front door and a walk through the school or via a classroom door that has a ramp (not all classrooms). This is a safeguarding concern meaning we couldn't stay open.</p> <p>There is no space in the school that can be closed for the main body of the school. I understand that our nursery has been used in the past but there is no fob secure door between nursery and the rest of the school and no adult toilet in the nursery unit. This means the main body of the school would need to be accessed for toilets. Also closing the nursery for a day causes us a loss of income.</p>	<p>A review of the polling district has been conducted. The area is primarily residential and no alternative venues are available.</p> <p>The Evergreen School nearby caters for children with special educational needs, and it is considered that disruption to the routine of children with special educational needs would have a greater affect if that school were to be used as a polling station.</p> <p>We have previously used the Pollards Inn which does fall within the polling district; however, this was during Covid, and the public house was undergoing refurbishment. The owner has since advised that the Pollards Inn is no longer available for use as a polling station.</p> <p>As there are no viable alternative premises for use as a polling station within this polling district I would recommend remaining at school.</p> <p>Use of Schools legislation: The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22.</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Coundon Polling Districts: BACB - Coundon Gate BACC – Coundon BACF - Westerton</p>	<p>Polling Station - Victoria Lane Academy Nursery (2009), Victoria Lane, Coundon, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 8NN</p>	<p>The nursery does have access however, nursery is not able to be secured from the remainder of the school, which would be a safeguarding breach.</p> <p>Due to the issue above re; access to the rest of the school, if the building was to be used as a polling station the whole building would need to be closed, thus affecting 171 pupils from nursery to Y6.</p>	<p>Awaiting further information before completing this section</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Spennymoor</p> <p>Polling Districts: BAAFC - Spennymoor 3</p> <p>BAAGA2 - Spennymoor 1A</p>	<p>Polling Station - Oxclose Nursery School (1021), Ox Close Crescent, Spennymoor, Co Durham, DL16 6RU</p>	<p>We do not wish for the Nursery to be used as a Polling Station and I have outlined the reasons why on the form. These are regarding the nature of the site and associated safeguarding risks through vehicles accessing (this can not be allowed at several points across the day) and the disruption to learning for our youngest pupils (it would not be possible for Nursery to be open while functioning as a polling station and COVID has already affected the early development of this group).</p>	<p>A review of the polling districts has been conducted. As the area is primarily residential no alternative venues are available.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to determine whether the school can remain open whilst being used as a polling station. The Head Teacher will have appropriate regard to safeguarding issues.</p> <p>In the first round of the LGBCE review of Durham there were proposed changes to the warding arrangements within this polling district, which, if remaining in the final proposals may affect the current polling district boundaries. I would therefore recommend remaining at the school until the LGBCE Final Recommendations are published. A further review will be conducted before the scheduled elections in May 2025.</p> <p>Use of Schools legislation: The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22.</p>

<p>Electoral Division: Evenwood</p> <p>Polling District: BALC - Woodland</p>	<p>Resident - Simon Land</p>	<p>The Woodland Village Hall is not Equality act compliant. For wheelchair users, access to the hall is only available via the double doors at the side of the building and the paths leading to that are poor with steps. Woodland Village Hall has high definition CCTV in the main hall so it would be difficult to position the voting booths in a position that will ensure secrecy of the vote. The CCTV is accessible remotely. there are few alternatives in the village, St Marys Church, this is accessible, Woodland School (it would be disruptive to close the school for poling day, and the Woodland Parish Council Chapple, This is quite small but is accessible.</p> <p>Accessibility is poor due to the paths surrounding</p>	<p>Woodland Village Hall has been used as a polling station for many years and is a constant and familiar location for the electorate. The venue has been contacted with regards to wheelchair accessibility from the entrance described. The venue has confirmed that the entrance is accessible for wheelchair users and accessed on a weekly basis by a user. No issues have been reported to the venue with regards to the access.</p> <p>The CCTV has been discussed with the venue and confirmation received that this will be disabled on polling day.</p> <p>The Returning Officer is responsible for providing a venue, so electors can cast their vote. The surrounding public paths and highways are the responsibility of the local authority, and the resident has been advised to report this issue through the appropriate channels.</p> <p>St Marys Church and Woodland School are both located outside of the polling district in BALB – Copley. This polling district is a different parish council area (Lynesack & Softley); therefore, these locations would not be able to be used for the BALC - Woodland Area polling district.</p>
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Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
		<p>the hall being in a poor state of repair. Access to the main door is via steps.</p> <p>Polling District Boundary Comments BALB and BALC</p> <p>Woodland Village is split between polling districts due to the village being split between two parishes. The parish boundary runs across the village so people in the east end of the village need to travel to Copley which is down a steep unlit road with no paths. The bus service does not run between Woodland and Copley on an evening.</p>	<p>The polling district boundary splits Woodland village as the west of Woodland village lies within Woodland Parish and the east lies within Lynesack and Softly Parish.</p> <p>Due to different parish electoral arrangements, the electors in the east of Woodland village would need to remain at Copley Village Hall polling station. Other voting methods are available to access if an elector could not travel to the polling station. Postal and Proxy voting can be requested online or in paper format.</p> <p>I recommend that Woodland Village Hall remains as the polling station for BALC – Woodland.</p> <p>I recommend that Copley Village Hall remains as the polling station for BALB – Copley.</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Tudhoe</p> <p>Polling District: BAAFA2 - Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange 1A?</p>	<p>Polling Station - King Street Primary School (2750), Hub Room, High Grange Road, Spennymoor, Co Durham, DL16 6RA</p>	<p>Unfortunatley due to the increasing needs of our pupils we are no longer able to offer this space to yourselves</p>	<p>A review of the polling districts has been conducted. An alternative location has been found at Spennymor Town Football Club. Sole use of the clubs "The Neil Adams Sports Bar" is available, providing a spacious room for elector's to vote. The access to the suggested room is via a ramped entrance. Limited parking is available at the grounds entrance. The bar does not open on a Thursday.</p> <p>I also propose to use the O'Hehir School of Irish Dance (formerly Barnfield Road Day Centre) which will better serve electors in the surrounding area of the premises.</p> <p>I recommend reallocating the streets within the polling district to each venue. Once the final reccomendations have been published for the LGBCE review, a further review would be conducted to redraw the boundaries for BAAFA1 and BAFA2 to create three polling districts</p> <p>BAAFA1 – The Neil Adams Sports Bar BAAFA2 – Hartley Terrace Commual Room BAAFA3 - O'Hehir School of Irish Dance</p> <p>I recommend new polling stations at The Neil Adams Sports Bar, Spennymoor Town Football Club and adding a further polling station at O'Hehir School of Irish Dance, Barnfield Road.</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Tudhoe</p> <p>Polling District: BAAEB1 - Tudhoe 2</p>	<p>Polling Station - Meeting Room 5, Durham County Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor, Co Durham, DL16 6JQ</p>	<p>Due to refurbishment works arranged for commencement 2024 the building would not be able to be used.</p>	<p>Available: No</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Contact to be made with the facilities manager in February 2024 to confirm if works are still on schedule to be started. If refurbishment is due to start after May 2024 the polling station will remain in use.</p> <p>If unavailable electors will be moved to the Education Development Centre, Enterprise Way, Spennymoor, Co Durham, DL16 6YP on a temporary basis until refurbishment is completed as there are no suitable alternative venues within the polling district.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Woodhouse Close</p> <p>Polling District: BAGB - Woodhouse Close 1</p>	<p>Polling Station - Aclet Close Nursery School (1018), Aclet Close, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, DL14 6PX</p>	<p>Given there are many other public buildings in the area, governors request that the school is not used as a polling station. Despite the fee paid to the school, income is from private paying families.</p>	<p>A review of the polling districts has been conducted and to avoid causing disruption to the school I recommend moving electors to the existing polling station at Auckland Youth and Community Centre (AYCC) and creating a double station. The AYCC is located outside the polling district in the adjacent BAGC polling district. The polling station is a central location for the residents in the current Woodhouse Close Division and no electoral boundary arrangements are affected.</p>

CITY OF DURHAM CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Belmont</p> <p>Polling District: DDC - Pelaw (West)</p>	<p>Polling Station - St Joseph's RCVA Primary School (3489), Mill Lane, Gilesgate, Co Durham, DH1 2JQ</p>	<p>We are unable to act as a Polling Station until 2025 as we have no day left. Children need 190 teaching days each academic year. We would need this in advance.</p>	<p>A review of the area has been conducted. Durham Baptist Church was approached for the possible use as a polling station. The church could not accommodate us as a polling station due to long term booking. As there are no other alternative venues, I recommend that the school remains in use as a polling station.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Deerness</p> <p>Polling District: DSA - Ushaw</p>	<p>Resident - Anonymous</p> <p>Durham Central Liberal Democrats -Edwin Simpson</p>	<p>St Lukes Mews is in D S B register, should be in D S A, St Lukes Church Hall polling station is right next door, but none postal voters have to go to Ushaw Moor Catholic Club to vote. Could you please change this to make it easier for residents to vote. St Lukes Mews in wrong register</p>	<p>St Lukes Mews has been allocated to an incorrect polling district. This will be corrected on publication of the revised register on 1 December.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Framwellgate and Newton Hall</p> <p>Polling Districts:</p>	<p>Polling Station - Finchale Primary School (2748), Canterbury Road, Newton Hall, Co Durham, DH1 5XT</p>	<p>Would prefer not to be used if an alternative can be found</p>	<p>A review of both polling districts was conducted, as the area is primarily residential, no alternative could be found.</p> <p>I recommend Finchale Primary School remains as the polling station.</p>

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
DAA2 - Newton Hall North DBA2 - Newton Hall South			

<p>Electoral Division: Framwellgate and Newton Hall</p> <p>Polling District: DNA – Brasside</p>	<p>Clerk of - Framwellgate Moor Parish Council</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to make representations on the future of electoral arrangements in the county.</p> <p>Framwellgate Moor Parish Council discussed the matter at its meeting on 11 October 2023.</p> <p>The view of the council is that, whilst there are no realistic alternatives to what is proposed, it is hoped that Durham County Council will properly promote postal voting as a convenient alternative to going to a polling station.</p> <p>This is because many residents, in particular those of the village of Brasside, have to travel long distances to polling stations. This can become a disincentive to voting, especially for the elderly and those with restricted mobility,</p>	<p>A review of the area has been conducted and no alternative venues are available.</p> <p>The Returning Officer has a communication plan to promote all voting methods including postal and proxy voting in the lead up to an election. Poll cards will also provide the necessary information and deadlines to apply for a postal vote or proxy vote.</p> <p>I recommend Newton Hall Community Centre remains as the polling station.</p>
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Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
		and the parish council is keen to see that all residents are able to have their voice heard.	
<p>Electoral Division: Nevilles Cross</p> <p>Polling District: DCC1 - Crossgate Lower</p> <p>Electoral Division: Elvet and Gilesgate</p> <p>Polling District: DCD - Crossgate (Lower)</p>	<p>Polling Station - The Spiritualist Church Hall (Durham), John Street, Durham, DH1 4DE</p>	No Longer available.	<p>Available: No</p> <p>A suitable alternative has been located at Waddington Street United Reform Church, 0.2 miles from The Spiritualist Church Hall, within the same polling district DCC1. The building is fully accessible, the main entrance on Mowbray Street has a small step, but a portable ramp is available, a doorbell is located at the entrance which can alert polling staff, if electors need assistance. The entrance from Waddington street accesses directly into the church and then requires the use of the wheelchair lift to gain access to the polling station. The building has a inducton loop system installed. Limited on street pay and display parking is available.</p> <p>The polling station room is large enough to accomodate a double station, which is required.</p> <p>I recommend using Waddington Street United Reform Church as the polling station for DCC1 and DCD.</p>

<p>Electoral Divison: Nevilles Cross</p> <p>Polling District: DFB - Nevilles Cross (South)</p>	<p>Resident -Trustee of Neville's Cross Community Association</p>	<p>The Hub, Durham University, The Aoproach</p> <p>Last time there was a problem because the signage was poor, there was nothing from the A167 at Mill Hill Lane. The assumption seemed to be that people would drive. Merryoaks Community Hall would be a much more accessible and convenient place, as well as being in the same park as the previous polling station.</p> <p>A long way to walk for a great number of the electorate</p>	<p>A review of the area has been conducted.</p> <p>Merryoaks Community Hall has been identified as an additional polling station for this polling district. The venue is a newly built community building on Park House Road, within the residential area of Merryoaks. The building is accessible, has the choice of a multipurpose room or large main hall, induction loop system installed and adequate parking facilities.</p> <p>I recommend introducing Merryoaks Community Hall as a second polling station to serve the electors in the surrounding area of the premises, which include Merryoaks, Lowe Banks Road, Potters Bank and the A167.</p> <p>The following streets in the Mount Oswald's area would be allocated to The Hub polling station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blaidwood Drive Cedar Drive Chipchase Grove Fowler Wynd Gleneagles Way Muirfield Portrush Way Richardby Crescent Roundhaven St Georges Way St Oswalds Drive Sunningdale The Approach The Drive Turnberry Walk Wentworth Drive
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Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
			<p>Wilkinson Walk</p> <p>This would provide for an approximate elector split of 900 to 1000 per station.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Sherburn</p> <p>Polling District: DKD2 - Sherburn Village</p>	<p>Polling Station - Attlee Square Communal Hall, Attlee Square, Sherburn Village, Co Durham, DH6 1JN</p>	<p>Is under review and may close 2023.</p>	<p>Available: No</p> <p>DKD2 was previously created as a polling district for administration purposes to split DKD to accommodate the two polling stations in the area.</p> <p>I propose to move electors to the polling station in the DKD1 (Sherburn Community Centre, Front Street, Sherburn Village, Co Durham, DH6 1HD) polling district, which is located near the villages' local amenities. The polling station is already a double station and by adding DKD2 each station would have 1247 electors each, including postal voters.</p> <p>Within the DKD2 polling district the only alternative is Sherburn Village Primary School, to avoid disruption to the school I recommend allocating the electors to the existing polling station at the Sherburn Community Centre.</p>

EASINGTON CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Deneside and Seaham</p> <p>Polling District: ERB1 – Seaham North No 1a ERB2 – Seaham North No 1b</p>	<p>Believe Housing</p>	<p>Byron House is under review and likely to close this year so its use as a polling station cannot be guaranteed.</p>	<p>There are possible alternative premises in the polling district – two primary schools and Seaham Town Council offices. An inspection of the town council offices was carried out by electoral services staff who found that the premises offer suitable accommodation and appropriate access to be used as a polling station in the future. Due to these findings, no further investigation of the schools was made. Members from both divisions were contacted regarding this proposed change and asked for comments and suggestions. Councillor McKenna responded while the town council office is the best alternative, he had concerns regarding elderly residents without transport and their ability to travel to the new polling station, however, electoral staff explained that when a change to their polling station is decided, all electors will be notified by letter which will also provide information on how to apply for a postal or proxy vote.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Peterlee West</p> <p>Polling District: EDC – Passfield No 3</p>	<p>East Durham College</p>	<p>A 26 week programme of refurbishment works starts in March 2024 in the area of the college that is currently used as a polling station. Our request has been passed to management for a decision about finding an alternative space in the premises</p>	<p>The Returning Officer has received and interim response from the college management and has been informed that there is potentially a room that could be made available to be used as the polling station, however, confirmation has not been received from the course leader that we can use this room. A site visit will be arranged to view the</p>

			room to ascertain its suitability. Further details will be provided before the Council Meeting on 24 January 2024.
<p>Electoral Division: Murton</p> <p>Polling District: EMA2 – Murton West No 1b EMB – Murton West No 2 EMC – Murton West No 3 RNB – Murton East No 1</p>	Ribbon Academy	Due to the layout of the school, it is not possible to separate the children from members of the public so due to safeguarding issues, the school needs to close on election day. Pupils therefore miss a day of education and well as it being disruptive to parents.	There are no other suitable premises in the polling district. The Returning Officer understands the concerns made by the school but as there is no alternative at the present time, has no other choice but to exercise his legal powers under the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (SI No. 3304) and continue to use the school as a polling station.
<p>Electoral Division: Dawdon</p> <p>Polling District: EOC – Dawdon No 3</p>	Ropery Walk Primary School	Due to the nature of the building and the requirement to keep children safe, when the school is used as a polling station, the whole school must close. This has a detrimental effect on the education of our school and has a times resulted in 4 days in 1 year.	There are no other suitable premises in the polling district. The Returning Officer understands the concerns made by the school but as there is no alternative at the present time, has no other choice but to exercise his legal powers under the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (SI No. 3304) and continue to use the school as a polling station.

NORTH DURHAM CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Sacriston</p> <p>Polling District: NDEB2 – Sacriston No 2b</p>	<p>Children & Young People’s Services, Durham County Council</p>	<p>Fyndoune Community College is no longer designated as a school and is currently occupied by three different provisions – a private nursery, an Alternative Provision Provider and by The Pines (which are part of the Education Health Needs Team at Durham County Council). The building is currently under review as to its viability to remain open with all occupants receiving notice of termination of lease. It can therefore not be confirmed if the building can be used as a polling station</p>	<p>The only other premises in the polling district is Sacriston Academy, but the Returning Officer, where possible does not want to introduce the use of a new school. Schools are only used if there is no other alternative premises. Following the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review in 2019, the polling district NDEB – Sacriston was divided three ways to reflect the current elector allocation to the three polling stations in the village, which included Fyndoune Community College. It is now proposed to move the electors to the existing polling station at the Salvation Army Hall. Local members have been contacted and both raised concerns regarding the distance to the proposed new station for residents with mobility issues. Councillor Wilson asked if there was a possibility of there being a temporary voting station. Mobile units are no longer an option as they do not provide the necessary disabled access and privacy to facilitate Voter ID as required by the Elections Act 2022. Electors whose polling station is changed will all be contacted to advise them of the change and to offer the option of postal or proxy voting if they have difficulty getting to the new location.</p>

<p>Electoral Division: Chester le Street South</p> <p>Polling District: NDJA – Chester South</p>	<p>Newker Primary School</p>	<p>The school is concerned that it will have to close in order for it to be used as a polling station. It had to close due to Covid and during recent strikes</p>	<p>The school was used for the first time in 2021 due to mobile units not being available for hire – two units had historically been sited on the Garden Farm Shop car park. This polling district is a highly populated area with no community buildings. A possible alternative suggested in the past by a local member was the Garden Farm Pub. A member of electoral services contacted the premises and was informed by the manager that the brewery will not allow her to hire out the premises for election purposes. There are no other suitable premises in the polling district. The Returning Officer understands the concerns made by the school but as there is no alternative at the present time, has no other choice but to exercise his legal powers under the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (SI No. 3304) and continue to use the school as a polling station.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Pelton</p> <p>Polling District: NDNB – Pelton No 3 NDNC – Pelton No 4 NDND – Pelton No 5</p>	<p>Roseberry Primary and Nursery School</p>	<p>The school would prefer not to be used as a polling station as it means that it has to close the nursery unit which is a huge inconvenience to both the school and parents, especially those who pay for their sessions. The school also has to make someone available out of hours to open and lock up.</p>	<p>There are no other suitable premises in the polling district. The Returning Officer understands the concerns made by the school but as there is no alternative at the present time, has no other choice but to exercise his legal powers under the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (SI No. 3304) and continue to use the school as a polling station.</p>

<p>Electoral Division: Tanfield</p> <p>Polling District: NDSC – Shield Row</p>	<p>Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, Durham County Council</p>	<p>Shield Row Community House is currently closed but may be transferred and reopen if any local community groups express an interest in taking over the premises.</p>	<p>There are two possible alternative premises in the polling district and are situated in the same building – Stanley Education Centre and Shield Row Primary School. A visit was made to both premises to assess which was suitable. Shield Row Primary as a large hall available but as this is used for school lunches would mean the school would have to close. Stanley Education Centre has a large room available (Lanchester Suite), however, at present, the whole of the premises including this room are accommodating children from St Bennet School Ouston due to building work taking place at the school due to RACC. As this is a temporary measure, it is proposed that Stanley Education Centre is used in the future as the polling station. If the school is still using the premises in May 2024 it would mean that classes could not take place on election day but all being well, once they return to their own building, they will not be affected. Local members were contacted regarding this proposed change and both Councillor Binney and Charlton agreed that this was the best option.</p>
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NORTH WEST DURHAM CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Consett South</p> <p>Polling District: NWDIC – Berry Edge West</p>	<p>Resident</p>	<p>A comment was received via the online consultation form about the distance to walk to the polling station at the Gospel Hall, Front Street, Consett for electors</p>	<p>This polling station is part of Consett South Electoral Division and is a large area containing housing and some industrial and retail premises – there are no community buildings in this area so the electors have to travel to a polling station in an adjoining polling district. There are 3 possible stations that they could be allocated to :</p> <p>Masonic Hall, Blackhill The Grove Methodist Church Gospel Hall, Front Street, Consett</p> <p>It was decided that the Gospel Hall was the best option as it is located in the town where electors are more likely to travel to for local amenities and is reachable by bus links for those who do not have their own transport. No change is recommended.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Weardale</p> <p>Polling District: NWDPD - Wearhead</p>	<p>Councillor John Shuttleworth</p>	<p>Councillor Shuttleworth asked if we could reconsider using Wearhead Village Hall as the polling station instead of Wearhead Primary School. The polling station was moved to the school at the last review as the village hall does not have disabled access and complaints had been received from an elector regarding this.</p>	<p>Electoral Services staff visited the premises and the access has not changed – there are still numerous steps into the main door at the front of the building and there are also steps into the side access. As the building does not offer any disabled access, it is appropriate that the polling station remain at the school.</p>

<p>Electoral Division: Tow Law</p> <p>Polling District: NWDSC – Billy Row</p>	<p>Believe Housing</p>	<p>The Communal Room at Stanley Way, Billy Row is under review and likely to close this year so its use as a polling station cannot be guaranteed.</p>	<p>The polling district had been reviewed and these are the options available in the area for a polling station in the future: Billy Row Club – not appropriate as it does not have disabled access</p> <p>Peases West Primary School – while this school is located centrally in the village, the Returning Officer, where possible does not want to introduce the use of a new school. Schools are only used if it is necessary to do so, as they likely need to close to accommodate the provision of a polling station for safeguarding.</p> <p>The only other option is to move the electors to one of the existing polling stations in adjoining polling districts: Stanley Village Community Hall Crook Community Leisure, Peases West Sports Centre</p> <p>The more suitable option is Peases West Sports Centre as this has the lower number of voters currently allocated to it and can therefore accommodate extra electors and residents of Billy Row may be more likely to travel past these premises to go into Crook for local amenities and services than to Stanley, Crook.</p> <p>Recommended that Peases West Sports Centre be used at the polling station for electors from the polling district NWDSC – Billy Row.</p>
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<p>Electoral Division: Burnopfield And Dipton</p> <p>Polling District: NWDAB – Burnopfield NWDAC - Crookgate</p>	<p>Returning Officer</p>	<p>Burnopfield Ambulance Station is the current polling station for this polling district, however, after an initial verbal agreement, Electoral Services staff have been unable to gain any further agreement or contact details from the association.</p>	<p>Historically, the Masonic Hall and Burnopfield Methodist Church have both at one time, been used as a polling station. The Masonic Hall is currently up for sale so its future is unknown and the Returning Officer has been informed that the church is not available. As no confirmation can be received from the Ambulance Station, it is necessary that new premises are found to locate the polling station. Contact has been made with Burnopfield Victory Club which is located in the same area and an inspection of the premises is to be arranged. The Returning Officer is currently waiting for a response from the club management regarding the visit. Further details will be provided before the Council Meeting on 24 January 2024.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Consett North</p> <p>Polling District: NWDGB – Villa Real</p>	<p>Villa Real School</p>	<p>The headteacher commented that the school normally remains open and allows us the use of a classroom at the front of the building that we can have access to without disrupting the rest of the school. The pupils from this class are moved elsewhere in the school on election day. However, the school is currently very overcrowded so there is no other space available to move these children so they would have to be moved off site or the school close all together.</p>	<p>There are no other suitable premises in the polling district. The only other option would be to move the electors to the existing polling station located at Consett Leisure Centre which is the adjoining polling district. The Returning Officer understands the concerns made by the school but as there is no alternative at the present time, has no other choice but to exercise his legal powers under the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (SI No. 3304) and continue to use the school as a polling station.</p>

SEDGEFIELD CONSTITUENCY

Electoral Division/Polling District	Comment Received From	Comment	(Acting) Returning Officer Response
<p>Electoral Division: Aycliffe East</p> <p>Polling District: SIA1 - Shafto St Marys</p>	<p>Polling Station - Sugar Hill Infants School (2743), Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 5NU</p>	<p>We currently use a kitchen area in the infant building of which voters will access through the infant staff car park and into a side door. This door does not have ramp access. Voters are not able to park in this car park.</p> <p>At the moment we are able to use an area in the infant building for voters to access, without the disruption of closing down any departments, resulting in children not attending school.</p> <p>In January 2024 we will be at the beginning of our new build process. During this time, site vehicles will be accessing the building to the construction site throughout the day, which may cause disruption to voters trying to access the building.</p> <p>Once the new building is complete (estimated approx. one year) we will not have any available areas to use as a polling station due to the layout of the building. We will not have two separate buildings as we do now.</p> <p>We do not feel that closing a building for the use of a polling station would be</p>	<p>A review of the polling district has been conducted. As the area is primarily residential no alternative venues are available.</p> <p>I must recommend continued use of the school as a a polling station.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to determine whether the school can remain open whilst being used as a polling station. The Head Teacher will have appropriate regard to safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Use of Schools legislation: The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22</p>

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		<p>acceptable to parents and pupils due to attendance requirements and parent's working commitments. Closing down departments to accommodate a polling station is detrimental to pupil's attendance, especially in the current climate and the aftermath of the past few years due to COVID 19 etc. We do hope this could be taken into consideration.</p>	
<p>Electoral Division: Aycliffe West</p> <p>Polling District: SFD - West No. 4</p>	<p>Polling Station - Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery School, Stephenson Way, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 7DD</p>	<p>Lower site, (nursery / KS1) is accessible but is not able to be kept separate as solely nursery, meaning all Lower site need to be closed for safeguarding purposes.</p> <p>As a result, this would impact negatively upon KS2 attendance as parents would not bring children from the same family to KS2, if EY's /KS1 were to be closed for polling.</p>	<p>A review of the polling district was conducted for a by-election held in May 2023. The Phoenix Club was approached as an alteranative venue. The only room available for use was on the 1st floor. The room was open plan with an adjacent restaurant used by the public. As such the room was not suitable for use as a polling station as the the secrecy of the vote could not be maintained.</p> <p>I continue to recommend use of the Lower site of Stephenson Way Academy and Nursery school as a polling station.</p>
<p>Electoral Division: Ferryhill</p> <p>Polling Districts:</p>	<p>Polling Station - Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre, Lambton Road, Ferryhill, Co</p>	<p>Being used to house secondary school until 19th December due to raac, but still available. Has disabled access.</p>	<p>Will be available for furture elections and recommend Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre remains as a polling station.</p>

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SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2	Durham, DL17 8TB		
Electoral Division: Ferryhill Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2	Resident - Anonymous	<p>The centre is managed by a labour councillor and another labour councillor works there too. The bar manager is one of the labour councillors mother. Biased place. Alternative station could be Ferryhill station wmc which is 100 yards as the crow flies, Broom Cottages primary school as they share DCC offices</p>	<p>Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre, Lambton Road, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8TB polling station is accessible for both polling districts SBA and SBB.</p> <p>The venue has been used for many years and is a constant and familiar polling station venue for the electorate.</p> <p>The Polling station is a double station which requires an adequately sized room, which the venue provides. The venue has allocated disabled parking and adequately sized car park for a station with a large electorate.</p> <p>The Workingman's Club does not provide adequate parking for electors. On street parking is not available due to a busy main road.</p> <p>Where there is suitable venue within the area we would not recommend moving to a school.</p> <p>Councillors both at County and Parish level have links to many community buildings within the Durham County area. It would not be reasonable to disregard suitable buildings for these reasons. All candidates and agents are made aware of the Code of Conduct of for</p>

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			<p>Campaigners on polling day. Campaigning is not allowed inside a polling place; however, campaigning is allowed in public space around a polling place. Undue influence is also an election offence and if an elector believes this is taking place, it can be report directly to the Police.</p> <p>The venue has been contacted regarding the bar area. It is not possible for the bar area to be closed on polling day. The Cleves Ferry Suite is currently use as the polling station room and is a separate room from the bar area, therefore maintaining the secrecy of the vote. The route to the polling station does not require an elector to walk through the bar area as the Cleves Ferry Suite has its own entrance from reception.</p> <p>Alternatively, the dance studio can be used but is at the rear of the building and would require electors to be directed to the room. The current room is more accessible as it is near the main entrance.</p> <p>With those considerations considered I recommend that Ferryhill Sports and Education Centre, Lambton Road, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8TB remains as the polling station for both polling districts.</p>

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<p>Electoral Division: Ferryhill</p> <p>Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2</p>	Resident - Jean Bell	<p>The centre is managed by Councillor Curtis Bhiri who is the communications manager at this centre, and he is also a Ferryhill town councillor also the one managing the centre is also a Ferryhill town councillor Liam Fellows. Both Labour ones. I feel the using this building has an unfair advantage over other candidates in elections. As a lot of groups organisations use this building and come into contact with these two councillors in their day-to-day roles at this venue. So, I would like a more neutral place where people can vote. I feel they might have an unfair advantage over other candidates who are not in the same position as they are. So, I would like another suitable venue used.</p>	Response as previous
<p>Electoral Division: Ferryhill</p> <p>Polling Districts:- SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2</p>	Resident - Anonymous	<p>Managed and run labour councillors and their family. Influence people and it's unfair. The polling station room is just off the bar where the councillors mother works. Plenty of clubs DCC and schools near by</p>	Response as previous
<p>Electoral Division:</p>	Resident - Anonymous	<p>The polling station is run by members of the labour party which means that voting</p>	Response as previous

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Ferryhill Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2		cannot possibly be fair and voters can be swayed. It needs to be somewhere else and at a neutral position so that elections do not have interference.	
Electoral Division: Ferryhill Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2	Resident - Anonymous	Not very good for wheelchair users yes it has a ramp but very steep plus mayor of Ferryhill and family run this if they run the station for free that's ok but if they are paid it's a bit to close to home	Response as previous
Electoral Division: Ferryhill Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2	Resident - Anonymous	Some staff at this location are Councillors and this is also has a bar where said Councillors could influence peoples votes and it seems that this is not a good idea as polling stations should be seen to be unbiased.	Response as previous
Electoral Division: Ferryhill Polling Districts: SBA - Broom No. 1 SBB - Broom No. 2	Resident - Anonymous	This polling station is in a building that has councillors and close family members working in it. They also socialise in it and could influence peoples views who use the facilities and also would vote here. The polling station should be in a totally independent place. We used to vote in Cleves Cross our local primary school before the polling station was moved to the sports and education centre. This	Response as previous

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		would seem to be a much more suitable place as it would be totally independent.	

<p>Electoral Division: Ferryhill</p> <p>Polling District: SDC1 - Ferryhill Station</p>	<p>Polling Station - Royal British Legion Club, Back Linden Terrace, Ferryhill Station, Co Durham, DL17 0DQ</p>	<p>Closed and is up for sale</p>	<p>Available: No</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The polling district of SDC1 was created for administration purposes to split SCD between two polling stations in the area.</p> <p>As a result of the closure of the Royal British Legion Club I propose to move the electors from SDC1 to the polling station for SDC2 Mainsforth Community Association, High Street, Ferryhill Station, Co Durham, DL17 0AG. which is 0.8 miles from the Royal British Legion Club. The total electorate once combined would be 629 which is well within the recommended electorate per polling station set by the Electoral Commission. Should this recommendation be accepted, I will write to all affected electors notifying them of the change and offering them either a postal or proxy vote should the new venue be inconvenient for their use.</p> <p>I have also considered Ferryhill Station Primary school for use as a polling station as it lies within the polling district SDC1. However, I do not recommend this because of the disruption it would cause to education. Wherever possible we try to avoid using schools as polling stations, although in some areas this is unavoidable.</p>
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