

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Background Information and the Returning Officer's Proposals

Legislative Background: Representation of the People Act 1983
The Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

If you have any comments or questions please contact:

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Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in Rochford

The Reason for a review

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each polling district. It also has to keep these arrangements under review.

The last general review in Rochford was carried out during 2001 and came into force at the all-out Council elections in 2002. A few minor alterations to polling districts were made after the County boundary review in 2004. Since then no polling district has been altered although some polling stations have changed when the previously designated buildings became unavailable for various reasons.

Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the 1983 Act in respect of the way reviews must be undertaken. The most important change is that the Council must conduct a full review by 31 December 2007, and then every four years. This does not prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review in 2011.

The arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.

How the review is conducted

In general terms, the Council announces that a review is to take place. The Council consults the Returning Officer, who makes representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The Council publishes the Returning Officer's proposals and invites comments. These are considered before final decisions are made.

Only a full Council meeting can decide polling district boundaries.

The consultation must actively seek comments from people who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

Any elector may make representations. Although not specifically required in law, the consultation will include local political parties and elected representatives at all levels.

Timetable for this review

Notice of start of review	27 July 2007
Publication of Returning Officer's proposals	3 August 2007
West Area Committee	4 September
East Area Committee	12 September
Central Area Committee	20 September

Timetable (continued)

Comments from consultation by	28 September 2007
Report to Council meeting	30 October 2007
Arrangements come into force when next revised Electoral Register is published	1 December 2007

Making comments

The Returning Officer is proposing to keep the existing polling arrangements and to make minimal changes only where circumstances require. The intention is not to make changes for changes sake.

However, if someone wishes to propose major alterations, they should contact the Elections Officer as soon as possible, in order to allow further and wider consultation.

Comments should not to be restricted to alternative proposals; comments that support the Returning Officer's proposals are welcome in order to receive the widest range of opinions.

Comments should be made in writing to:

Mrs Barbara Cronin
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Rochford
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Throughout the review, all documentation and correspondence will be available for public inspection at the Council Offices in Rochford by arrangement with the Elections Office.

The Returning Officer's proposals

The 2001 review was necessary because of major changes to ward boundaries decided by the then Local Government Commission. The new arrangements came into force for the all-out Council elections in May 2002. This review was very thorough and considered all the major issues at the time. For this reason, and in view of the fact that some changes have been implemented in the intervening period for various reasons, it is intended to keep changes to a minimum, and only suggest alternatives where absolutely necessary.

Guidelines

The following considerations have been taken into account when drawing up the proposals, as electoral law requires them. Comments made during the consultation should keep these in mind.

1. The Council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
2. The Council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to voters who are disabled.

The Tables

Each ward is dealt with separately. For existing polling arrangements, the tables show:

- the polling district
- the number of electors as at 2 July 2007 (the most recent monthly update)
- the polling place
- disabled access, including where this is achieved by use of a temporary ramp*

*The Elections Office has circulated a questionnaire, on accessibility for persons with various types of disability, to the owners of all the polling stations currently in use. The responses received to date have been used to inform the Returning Officer's proposals.

Summary of proposed changes

For ease of reference, a summary of the Returning Officer's proposals for change, where necessary, across the whole District is shown on the first page, with the details for each individual ward (whether changed or not) shown on the following pages.

The ward tables and ward maps are available for inspection at the Council Offices in South Street, Rochford during normal office hours.