

Committee :	Full Council
Date:	5 December 2024
Title:	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
Purpose	To Approve the results of the Review
Author:	Siôn Huws, Propriety and Elections Manager
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Menna Trenholme, Corporate Support

1. The decision sought

1.1 To approve the results of the review of polling districts and polling places in the Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Bangor Aberconwy parliamentary constituencies (to the extent that they are located within Gwynedd) following a consultation period.

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.

4. The Review

4.1 The statutory review was conducted between 23 September 2024 and 1 November 2024. 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 Core Equality Group 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 two elections held this year provided us with up-to-date information on the condition and suitability of stations. A questionnaire was sent to each polling station's point of contact asking a series of questions about the condition of the station in advance. In addition to this our polling station inspectors were given a detailed checklist to fill out as they visited their stations on polling day in May. Furthermore, ask for feedback from our presiding officers and polling inspectors after each election. Any relevant information gathered through these processes has been considered as part of the review.

4.3 The (Acting) Returning officer must comment during any review on the polling stations. The changes to the parliamentary constituency boundaries meant that observations were invited from the Returning Officer of the Bangor Aberconwy constituency in relation to those polling places within Gwynedd. These comments were included in the information published and can be found in **Appendix 1**.

5. Response to the consultation

5.1 The responses received are summarised in the Appendix together with any further observations on those responses.

6. The Governance and Audit Committee

6.1 The report will have been presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 28 November 2024 and any observations the Committee may wish to make at the meeting of the Council.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the Council approves the the results of the review as set out in Appendix 1.

Views of the Statutory Officers

Monitoring Officer:

Legal Services have prepared the report. I have no comments to add in relation to propriety.

Chief Finance Officer:

Nothing to add from the perspective of financial propriety