

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 30TH NOVEMBER, 2023

REFERENCE FROM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 15TH NOVEMBER, 2023

“520 VALE OF GLAMORGAN POLLING DISTRICT AND PLACES REVIEW 2023
(DCR) –

The report was presented to the Committee by the Chief Executive of the Council, in conjunction with the Electoral Registration Manager, with the purpose of the Committee considering the proposals of the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places identified within this report.

The Chief Executive set out the background and terminology surrounding this review, as well as the following:

- Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review had to be undertaken within a 16-month window between 2nd October, 2023 and 31st January, 2025.
- The Vale of Glamorgan Polling Districts and Polling Place review commenced on 2nd October, 2023.
- As part of the review there were no issues identified with Polling Districts and no changes were recommended.
- As part of the review, visits had been made to each of the current and proposed Polling Places and Stations identified as requiring attention and local Ward Members had been consulted.
- The recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.51 of the report were for implementation in readiness for the next Parliamentary Election. The same polling plan would also be utilised for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2024.
- The findings of the review proposed changes to polling places in the following electoral wards: Baruc, Buttrills, Castleland, Cadoc, Sully, Dinas Powys, Wenvoe, St Nicholas and Llancarfan, Cowbridge and St Brides Major.
- These changes would help to accommodate Vale residents within their own polling district, or, if this was not feasible, to vote in polling places situated within a neighbouring polling district.

Following the presentation, a number of questions and comments were raised by the Committee:

- Councillor Carroll queried Polling District HC1 which related to Cadoc - Glenbrook Inn, Dobbins Road, Barry and the difficulties for residents in attending the relevant polling station in that location. This included the suggestion of having the Polling Station located at the nearby Lidl supermarket. It was explained that Lidl had been contacted concerning the

siting of a Polling Station at the location but had been unwilling to accommodate this proposal. Notwithstanding this fact, it was also explained that there was a move away from using portacabins or modular units as polling stations, given their temporary nature, their cost and their inflexibility in terms of space requirements. It was also noted that a similar situation had occurred in the Plymouth Ward where all lines of enquiry and options had also been exhausted. Common issues included the availability of buildings on a regular basis during election periods and / or the cost of using such facilities being outside the budget of the Council and did not provide any additional benefit compared to the existing facilities that the Council already used for elections.

- Councillor Carroll followed up with a query concerning the apparent anomaly with regards to the configuration of Polling Districts in the Cowbridge area and their relationship to the proposed and existing Polling places, which included SC0 and SA0 polling districts. In response, it was outlined that Cowbridge was in a unique situation due to the use of the Town Hall for a number of Polling Stations as part of the electoral process. As part of the review, the opportunity had been taken due to the expansion of Cowbridge in the western area around Declare Gardens of trying to find an additional polling station. This would result in some residents having to travel further to get to their Polling Station. On the Councillor's concerns that residents would continue to turn up at the Town Hall Polling Station due to lack of awareness of these changes or out of habit, it was pointed out that residents would be made aware of these changes via publicity campaigns and that the relevant households would receive a notification letter outlining these changes with this going out in the New Year ahead of any scheduled election. This would basically outline the changes to the Polling Stations and locations.
- On the Chair's query concerning the review and whether this simply looked at Polling Stations rather than the Districts, it was confirmed that the review had focussed on Polling Stations; however, the queries raised by Councillor Carroll around the anomalies and the Polling Stations in Cowbridge would be noted and considered further in due course. The Chair added that it was extremely beneficial that as part of the consultation this information had been sent out to all Elected Members and they had had the time to look and digest the details in order to send back anything they thought might need to be clarified or addressed.

Scrutiny Committee, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the proposed timetable for the review be noted and agreed.
- (2) T H A T the report, with particular reference to the proposed changes to the Polling Places and / or Polling Stations set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.51 therein, be referred to Cabinet for its consideration and agreement.
- (3) T H A T Cabinet considers referring this report to Council for its consideration with a view to approving the proposed changes with immediate effect and that this

report be referred to all Town and Community Councils and the Community Liaison Committee for information.

(4) T H A T the anomaly with regards to the configuration of polling districts in Cowbridge and its relationship with the proposed and existing polling places / polling stations be further considered in due course.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

(2) In order that Cabinet can consider the report and its proposed changes, in line with the Council's statutory functions under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and that the proposals contained in this report will assist with improving electors' voting experience and raise awareness.

(3) In order to allow the review to be accepted by Council and for the information of Town and Community Councils and the Community Liaison Committee.

(4) In order to review and address any anomalies identified.”