

Report to Council

Subject: Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations – Bestwood St Albans

Date: 21 January 2026

Author: Democratic Services Manager

Purpose

For Council to approve a new scheme of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in the Bestwood St Albans ward following the review process.

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1) Notes the responses to the consultation; and
- 2) Approves and adopts the new polling districts, polling places and polling stations scheme as set out in the attached document at Appendix 3; and
- 3) Request that the Chief Executive formally publishes the notice of the conclusion of the review and its findings; and
- 4) Note that the Chief Executive is authorised to designate an alternative polling place should one become unavailable at short notice before an election.

1 Background

1.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 required local authorities to complete a review of their polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2015 and requires them to do a subsequent review at least once every five years. The most recent scheduled review of the whole borough of Gedling commenced on 1 December 2023 and concluded in February 2024. The council have now commenced a localised review for the Bestwood St Albans ward only – this is due to the upcoming separation of the current Parish of St Albans following the recent Community Governance Review.

- 1.2 As required by the legislation, a public consultation period was held from Friday 24 October to Friday 19 December 2025 seeking the views and comments of electors, interested persons and any persons or bodies with expertise in access to premises or facilities for persons with any type of disability. The consultation also included all Borough Councillors, all Parish Councils, the MP and local community and voluntary groups.
- 1.3 During the consultation period, the Acting Returning Officer's proposals and maps of the proposed polling districts were published on the Council's website.
- 1.4 Responses to the public consultation are included with this report at Appendix 1. A total of 3 responses were received from parish councillors and the issues raised by the responses are addressed in the appendix.
- 1.5 For ease of reference the following definitions clarify the recommendations:

A Polling District is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a constituency, ward, or division into smaller parts.

A Polling Place is the building or area in which polling stations will be, selected by the Returning Officer.

A Polling Station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. There may be more than one Polling Station in a Polling Place, and this is decided by the Returning Officer for the election.

- 1.6 The following guidance was considered when reviewing polling districts and polling places. The first two points are required by electoral law, and the others are best practice:
 - The council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - The Council must seek to ensure that as far as is reasonable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.
 - Ideally, the polling place should be in its own polling district.
 - No polling place should be shared by two wards.
 - Where possible, "natural" boundaries should be used, e.g. railways, major roads, etc.
 - All properties in a minor road or estate should, ideally, be in the same polling district.

- 1.7 It should be noted that in the event a polling place becomes unavailable at short notice, the Chief Executive has delegated authority to find an alternative without the need to report to Council.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 Following collation of the consultation feedback, no changes are proposed to amend polling places from the original suggestions – to be held at the site of Emmanuel Church, Church Drive. The site has two potential polling stations, should separate physical rooms be required at an election – i.e. a parish council election

A new polling district will need to be established to ensure the newly created parish of Deer Park is a separate polling district.

- 2.2 The feedback gathered did make suggestions for altering polling places further than what the ARO had originally proposed and the specific feedback and the responses to these are shown in appendix 1.
- 2.3 Should Council approve this report, formal notice of the conclusion will need to be published online and in paper form at the Civic Centre as required by legislation. It is proposed that the Chief Executive formally publishes this notice.
- 2.4 An equality impact assessment of the proposals has been carried out, and included at appendix 4, which Council should have regard to when making its decision.

3 Alternative options

- 3.1 The ARO has reviewed all options given as part of the consultation and these are at appendix 1 of the report.
- 3.2 Members could choose to not accept the recommendations and suggest alternative arrangements, but this would mean we would not be able to conclude the review within the time set out in the notice of review published on 24 October 2025.

4 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

5 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications. The report supports compliance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

6 Equalities implications

There is a requirement under the Elections Act 2022 for authorities to give due regard to the accessibility of polling places to ensure electors with disabilities can vote in person should they desire to do so. This report and its recommendations bring about positive implications as it means electors with disabilities can voter at more accessible stations with better facilities.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no direct carbon considerations associated with the recommendations within this report.

8 Background papers

None identified

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summarised consultation responses with response from the (Acting) Returning Officer.

Appendix 2 – (Acting) Returning Officer proposals for the Bestwood St Albans ward of the Gedling constituency

Appendix 3 – Proposed new scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment