

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Statutory Polling District and Station Review 2019

1. Summary of responses to the public consultation

- 1.1 The consultation ran for 6 weeks from Monday 29th July to Sunday 8th September.
- 1.2 We received 135 responses from the public, 12 responses from elected members and 11 responses from parish councils and other community groups and stakeholders.
- 1.3 Overall the responses were very positive with 65% of respondents answering that they were happy with the polling places proposed.
- 1.4 Of those who were not happy the vast majority were unhappy at the use of schools as polling places with 30 responses stating that we should stop using schools as polling places.
- 1.5 There were also 10 responses stating we should stop using portacabins and temporary buildings as polling places.
- 1.6 Of the 148 polling places that were consulted upon all apart from 8 received either positive or neutral responses.

2. Polling places to which there was not a favourable response

Polling District	Polling place	Proposal	Consultation Responses
CD	Upperwood Academy, Dartree Walk, Darfield, Barnsley, S73 9NL	No changes planned	Alistair Budd, Principal: As you are probably aware, I have appealed against our school being used as a polling place on a number of occasions. I do this as I believe the ad hoc nature of some elections and the untimely elections in May (in our examination window) affect my effective running of the school. We have to base our In-service days around potential elections which do not always happen and then when we have ad hoc Elections this can be very difficult for us to organise. It affects the quality of my children's education and in the last year they had one day less schooling due to elections. My governance agree with me and we feel it would be much better to find a different locality for the elections.

Polling District	Polling place	Proposal	Consultation Responses
DA	Outreach Christian Centre, 80 Station Road, Darton, Barnsley, S75 5AF	New polling place to replace, Darton Primary School, Station Road, Darton, Barnsley, S75 5AD. This new polling place is in a good location with excellent access and parking facilities and will mean that there is no disruption to the school due to elections.	Parking facilities on a bend on main road. School traffic will prevent voters being able to park.
DC	Staincross Working Men's Club, New Road, Mapplewell, Barnsley, S75 6EW	New polling place to replace, Temporary Building, Grasmere Crescent, Staincross, Barnsley. This building is much better than a temporary building and will provide a better facility for staff and voters the polling district has been modified so voters who have been moved further away from their polling place can be offered a closer alternative.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Stop using porta cabin in co-op car park in mapplewell. 2) Use mapplewell Methodist church instead of the porta cabin in co-op car park in mapplewell. 3) Do not understand comments on closer alternative, it is wrong. The Windhill estate is low car owner and lot of elderly. Will they bother to vote. 4) Cllr Harry Spence: Having read the changes to polling places I object to the location at Staincross WMC from Grassmere Cres. There surely is a criteria as to how far a resident as to walk to their polling place. Without checking it must be a mile and to make matters more difficult there is no regular bus service. In my opinion moving this station will wipe out the vote in this area

Polling District	Polling place	Proposal	Consultation Responses
DE	Staincross Methodist Church, Blacker Road, Barnsley, S75 6BP	New polling place to replace Temporary Building Pioneer Car Park. This building is much better than a temporary building and will provide a better facility for staff and voters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use Mapplewell Methodist church instead of the porta cabin in co-op car park in mapplewell. 2) Very good station and gets lots waiting at bus stop and visiting co-op.
HC	Sure Start - Conservatory , Barnsley Road, Barnsley S75 3JS	No changes planned	<p>SHC has been a problem for years, whether at Dodworth St John's Academy or Holiday Inn, it is consistently the lowest turnout in the ward. This year only 101 votes were cast and last year was about 110.</p> <p>The main problem being that both of these are too far away from the majority of that box's population on South Rd/Queens Dr. I would like to see a temporary unit used at the end of Castle View/Barnsley Rd (cul-de-sac) to give people to best opportunity to use their vote.</p>
JD	Shawlands Primary School, Shaw Street, Barnsley, S70 6JL	No changes planned	There were a number of responses from parents (possibly prompted by the school) stating that they feel that the school should not be used as a polling station. Shaw Lane Sports club was suggested as an alternative.
LF	Shafton Primary School, High Street, Shafton, Barnsley, S72 8QA	No changes planned	Have you considered using Sharton Community Centre instead.
MG	Summer Lane Primary School, Summer Lane, Barnsley, S75 2AW	No changes planned	Parking was somewhat difficult at my local polling place during the last elections as it is only on-street parking, off Summer Lane, and it can be difficult to find space.

Polling District	Polling place	Proposal	Consultation Responses
QB	Bethel Community Church, Royston Lane, Royston, Barnsley, S71 4NJ	New polling station to replace, St John The Baptist CE Primary School, Vicarage Lane, Royston, Barnsley, S71 4QY. This new polling station is in a good location with excellent access and parking facilities and will mean that there is no disruption to the school due to elections.	This was suggested as a better venue than St John's Church in Royston by Cllr Tim Cheetham.
RD	St Helen's Church, 27 Laithes Lane, Barnsley, S71 3AF	New polling place to replace Temporary Building, Wingfield Road, Wingfield Road, Athersley, Barnsley. This building is much better than a temporary building and will provide a better facility for staff and voters.	Cllr Jenny Platts: the portakabin on Wingfield rd has been the polling place for many years and has served the Community which includes many elderly residents who live in the near vicinity and moving this to St Helens church which is at the top of Laithes lane will be particularly difficult for these residents . Cllr Sarah Tattersall: It's good that we have a permanent polling place at St helens church instead of the temporary Wingfield rd site however it may impact on our resident votes a little as they will have further to walk.

- 2.1 All of nine of these contested polling places involve either schools or temporary buildings. As part of our review we have aimed to reduce our use of both schools and temporary buildings. In the case of schools this is because often there is no alternative except to close the school on polling day, this causes disruption to the school and is unpopular with parents who have to find childcare, often at short notice. In the case of temporary buildings this is because they are small, difficult to access for people with restricted mobility and unpopular with the staff who have to use them as they are difficult to heat and have no running water. They are also more than ten times as expensive as a normal polling station.
- 2.2 We received a response from Alistair Budd, the Principal of Upperwood Academy. He is unhappy at our using it as a polling place and would like us to discontinue using it. He has contacted us to express this view on a number of previous

occasions. We have investigated this issue and are unable to locate an alternative venue.

- 2.3 We proposed stopping using Darton Primary School as a polling place, we received one response directed at this proposal. The respondent was concerned about the availability of parking at the proposed new polling place. Whilst there is no dedicated off road parking at the venue there is a considerable amount of street parking by the venue. The access into the venue is very good and the distance voters have to travel from the street into the building is shorter than at Darton Primary School. In addition I have received representation from Darton Primary for a number of years that they no longer wish to be a polling station. I do not consider this to be a sufficient argument to revert to Darton Primary School.
- 2.4 We received 4 comments in relation to our proposal to change the polling place from the temporary building on Grasmere Crescent to the Staincross Working Mens Club, two comments were in favour and two against including one from Cllr Harry Spence. Both objections to the change were on the basis of how far residents would have to travel to vote. The location of the polling place would mean that residents of Grasmere Crescent who would previously have had a polling station on their doorstep would now have to walk 0.6 miles to vote. However the residents who live by Staincross Working Mens Club currently have to walk this distance in order to vote at Grasmere Crescent. The respondents are correct that neither venue is ideal and neither venue is well situated in relation to the area it serves.
- 2.5 We received two comments one in favour and one against our proposal to change the polling place from the temporary building on the pioneer car park to the Staincross Methodist Church. In this instance the proposal is to move the polling place around 100 yards to the Methodist Church where there is much better disabled access and facilities for staff. The argument that there will be fewer passing voters should not trump improving access for disabled voters.
- 2.6 We received one comment with regard to the polling place in the SureStart Conservatory at Dodworth St John Academy. The respondent proposed placing a temporary building on some land at the end of the Castle View cul-de-sac. Unfortunately the land was not flat and therefore not suitable for a portacabin.
- 2.7 We received a number of comments that Shaw Lane Sports Club would be a suitable polling venue that would allow Shawlands Primary School to remain open on elections days minimising disruption Shaw Lane Sports club has a large car park and suitable access requirements. The only consideration would be the length of the drive for voters to walk if they travel on foot. The consideration that has been received from Cllr Williams who represents Kingstone ward is that it would be better to minimise the disruption at the school.
- 2.8 A comment was received suggesting Shafton Community Centre as an alternative to Shafton Primary School. The community centre is a suitable venue to be used as a polling place. The North East ward members are happy with this change.
- 2.9 A comment was received about the difficulty parking at Summer Lane Primary School. The only alternative that was obviously available is the Polish Social Club on Blackburn Lane. This was inspected and found to be an undesirable location as

access to the room would have been through the bar and the lighting in the room was poor.

- 2.10 We received two comments from elected members around the proposal to move the polling place from the temporary building at Wingfield Road to St Helen's Church. Cllr Jenny Platts questioned the need to move the station but Cllr Sarah Tattersall was in favour of the suggestion. This proposal moves the polling place slightly less than half a mile but it does move the polling place away from the majority of the population of the area.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Propose that full council approve the schedule of polling places as consulted on with the following amendments:

DC – The polling place to remain at the Temporary Building on Grasmere Crescent

JD – The polling place be changed from Shawlands Primary School to Shaw Lane Sports Club

LF – The polling place to be changed from Shafton Primary School to Shafton Community Centre

QB – The proposed polling place to be Bethel Community Church instead of St John's Church

RD – The polling place to remain at the Temporary Building on Wingfield Road

Officer Contact: Peter Clark **Date:** 18th September 2019