



**A MEETING** of the **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 6.00 pm

**ALL MEMBERS** of the **COUNCIL** are summoned to attend for the purposes of transacting the business specified in the Agenda which is set out below:

**[The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Tiverton on Wednesday, 20 December 2023 at 6.00 pm]**

**Please Note:** this meeting will take place at Phoenix House and members of the Public and Press are able to attend via Teams. If you are intending to attend in person please contact the committee clerk in advance, in order that numbers of people can be appropriately managed in physical meeting rooms.

**The meeting will be Hybrid and an audio recording made and published on the website after the meeting**

[To join meeting online, click here](#)

Meeting ID: 388 533 608 753  
Passcode: aBdFw6

**STEPHEN WALFORD**  
Chief Executive

21 November 2023

**Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place**

## AGENDA

### 1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### 2 **Public Question Time**

To receive any questions relating to items on the agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.

### 3 **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**

To record any interests on agenda matters.

### 4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements which the Chairman of the Council may wish to make.

### 5 **Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2023** *(Pages 3 - 12)*

To receive a report from the Electoral Services Manager. The Electoral Administration Act 2013, section 17 requires each authority to carry out a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations every 5 years. The current review must take place between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025. This review has now taken place. By publishing on 1 December 2023, polling districts can be brought in line with future parliamentary constituencies to prepare for a snap Parliamentary General Election.

### 6 **The Proposed Withdrawal and Dissolution of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee** *(Pages 13 - 18)*

To receive a report report following a steer from the Leaders / senior members of several Constituent Authorities for proposals to be brought forward to all Constituent Authorities to consider their withdrawal and dissolution of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee (the Joint Committee).

### **Meeting Information**

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. The Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Teams.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

Please note that a reasonable amount of hardcopies at the meeting will be available, however this is a limited number. If you are attending the meeting and would like a hardcopy of the agenda we encourage that you notify Democratic Services in advance of the meeting to ensure that a hardcopy is available. Otherwise, copies of the agenda can be found on our website.

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Laura Woon on: [lwoon@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:lwoon@middevon.gov.uk)

Public Wi-Fi is available in all meeting rooms.

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**Report for: Full Council**

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Date of Meeting:	29 November 2023
Subject:	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2023
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet member for the Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Jackie Stoneman, Electoral Services Manager
Exempt:	Not applicable  which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	Spreadsheet of polling districts, wards, polling stations with any proposed changes.

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)**

The Electoral Administration Act 2013 requires each authority to carry out a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations every 5 years. The current review must take place between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025. This review has now taken place. By publishing on 1 December 2023, polling districts can be brought in line with future parliamentary constituencies to prepare for a snap Parliamentary General Election.

**Polling District** - Each parish is a separate polling district (or multiple polling districts for warded parishes) and is a sub-division of the parliamentary constituency.

**Polling Place** - A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district. The polling places for all polling districts in Mid Devon are designated as the whole polling district.

**Polling Station** - Polling stations are the rooms or areas within the polling place where voting takes place.

**Following a consultation period and review, it is recommended that Full Council approve the following:**

**Recommendations for changes in polling districts:**

- a. All polling districts to have new prefixes to reflect the new parliamentary constituencies and District Wards (e.g. CD-BO for Central Devon Constituency, Boniface Ward)
- b. Town wards in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton with more than one polling district to be amalgamated to tidy up the polling districts (e.g. for Boniface, AK, AL and AM to be replaced by CD-BO). There is no reason to keep them split out.
- c. Amalgamate Sandford and Sandford East Village, as they all vote at Sandford Parish Hall and are in the same electoral area at all levels.

**Recommendations for changes in polling stations:**

- d. All of Tiverton Castle Ward to vote at the Signpost Club (Tiverton Market). Some electors who previously voted at Moorhayes Community Centre and St George's Church extension will change polling station. This follows County and District boundary reviews in recent years and ensures that the polling station is within the polling district.
- e. Cullompton Padbrook and Cullompton Vale voters to vote at the John Tallack Centre (behind Culm Valley Leisure Centre). Padbrook Ward voters previously voted at the Community Centre, but it is not in the polling district for the new ward. There is no suitable polling station in Vale Ward. Those voters previously voted at the Town Hall, but parking is much better at the John Tallack.
- f. Some Tiverton Lowman Ward to vote at Tiverton Indoor Bowls Centre instead of Moorhayes. These voters were previously in a tiny polling district left over from the district boundary review. The new polling station is no further to travel.
- g. The part of Lowman Ward that previously voted at William Authers Hall (Adventure Playground) to vote at Moorhayes Community Centre instead, as it is a much more suitable venue and has ample parking.
- h. Uffculme voters to vote at Magelake instead of the Village Hall, due to complaints about damage to properties from cars manoeuvring around the polling station and lack of parking at the Village Hall.

## **Section 2 – Report**

- 1.1 The above changes will be implemented on 1 December 2023, when the 2024 electoral register is published. This helps prepare the electoral register for use at a Parliamentary General Election.
- 1.2 The recommendations above arise as a result of recent changes to the parliamentary constituency boundaries as undertaken by the Boundary Commission. While the majority of changes are administrative requirements, the review also seeks to take the opportunity to make other amendments as required in order to address any current or known issues with polling locations. There is a statutory process for this review, including formal consultation (see 'Risk Assessment' comments below), which has informed the recommendations.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Legal Implications**

The (Acting) Returning Officer has legal responsibility for administering elections. The Electoral Registration Officer has a duty to publish electoral registers which must be organised in polling districts, which reflect all electoral areas.

### **Risk Assessment**

Town/parish Councils, Elected Members, political parties and the public were consulted on the suitability of polling premises to ascertain the risks of using buildings as polling stations. Polling staff are also consulted at each election. Comments from these were considered as part of this review and are fed into election risk assessments.

### **Impact on Climate Change**

None.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not applicable.

### **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

Not applicable.

## **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

**Date:** 14 November 2023

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leiburne  
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer  
**Date:** 14 November 2023

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford  
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive  
**Date:** 13 November 2023

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr  
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager  
**Date:** 20 November 2023

**Cabinet member notified:** Yes

#### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Jackie Stoneman  
Email: JStoneman@middevon.gov.uk

**Background papers:** N/A



Old PD	new PD	Parish	polling stations	polling district amalgamations	notes
DB, DE, DS	TM-CA	Tiverton Town Council (Castle Ward)	all of Castle ward to vote at the Signpost Club (DB, DE used to vote at Moorhayes and DS at St George's church extn)		Due to new district boundaries. Moorhayes is in Lowman Ward. DS used to be a separate ward when there was a Central Ward. This was done away with by the Boundary Commission as part of the District Review. Signpost Club is no further for voters to travel.
CJ	HS-CP	Cullompton Town Council (Padbrook Ward)	Cullompton Community Centre to move to John Tallack		new district wards - Community Centre not in Padbrook ward. Better parking at John Tallack (leisure centre)
CK	HS-CV	Cullompton Town Council (Vale Ward)	Cullompton Vale voters to move from Town Hall to John Tallack		no suitable polling station in Vale Ward. John Tallack much better parking for out-of-town voters
DI	TM-LO1	Tiverton Town Council (Lowman)	Move from Moorhayes to Indoor Bowls		Closer. DI is a tiny register left over from District Review. Only contains Cowleymoor Road and Threwstones Close.
DL	TM-LO2	Tiverton Town Council (Lowman Ward)	Move from William Authers to Moorhayes		About the same distance (nearer for some, further for others) but much better polling station with parking.
EA and EA-1	TM-LC3 and TM-UC4	Uffculme	Village Hall to Magelake		Much better parking. Residents near Village Hall complained about cars causing damage to properties

Old PD	new PD	Parish	polling stations	polling district amalgamations	notes
AK, AL, AM	CD-BO	Crediton Town (Boniface Ward)		All Boniface registers in together.	No reason for splitting them out as they are all the same area at all tiers of government. More flexibility if polling station unavailable. Less risk of new properties being placed in the wrong polling district
AN, AO, AP	CD-LA	Crediton Town (Lawrence Ward)		All Lawrence registers in together	
DA, DB, DC, DD, DE, DS	TM-CA	Tiverton Town Council (Castle Ward)		Amalgamate all castle polling districts	
DN, DO, DP, DQ, DR	TM-CR	Tiverton Town Council (Cranmore Ward)		Amalgamate all of Cranmore polling districts	
DT, DU, DV, DW, DX, DY	TM-WX3	Tiverton Town Council (Westexe Ward)		Amalgamate all Westexe registers	
DH, DI, DJ, DK, DL, DM	TM-LO1 and TM-LO2	Tiverton Town Council		Amalgamate registers into two - one for MD Indoor Bowls and one for Moorhayes	

Parish	Date of response	Respondent name and capacity	Polling station comment	Polling district comment	change to initial proposals
Crediton Hamlets	29/09/23	Rachel Hodder, Parish Clerk	It is not clear where the boundary between Yeoford East and Yeoford West lies; and we expect that this will discourage voters living in the east of the Parish from voting as Yeoford is further away than the Boniface Centre and more difficult to get to, especially on public transport. In order to achieve maximum turnout we suggest that arrangements remain as they are now, with Yeoford East residents voting at the Boniface Centre.		All Crediton Hamlets voters to keep same polling station as currently
Crediton Hamlets	13/10/23	Nick Way, Alderman	Although I am a postal voter am I just wanted to make the point I hope Landscore school will be our polling station? The Boniface Centre must be at least a mile away.		All Crediton Hamlets voters to keep same polling station as currently
Cullompton	27/07/23	James Buczkowski	In regard to the Cullompton polling stations, I think the move to the JTC for Padbrook Ward is sensible, as is St. Andrews Ward remaining at the Town Hall. I would suggest that an alternative location is sought for Cullompton Vale, given the rural nature of the Ward it is likely that residents will travel by car to vote, so a polling station with attached parking would preferable.		Cullompton Vale to vote at John Tallack Centre instead of Town Hall
Cullompton	28/07/23	Sue Robinson, MDDC Councillor	I think that JTC Hall would be big enough for 2 Padbrook booths, and 1 Vale.		Cullompton Vale to vote at John Tallack Centre instead of Town Hall
Cullompton	24/10/23	Matt Fletcher, MDDC Councillor	As district councillor for Cullompton Vale, I wanted to reiterate the point from James, and agree that the Cullompton Vale polling station should be moved to accommodate residents travelling from the rural areas that make up the ward.		Cullompton Vale to vote at John Tallack Centre instead of Town Hall
Culmstock	26/09/23	Melanie Shore-Quinain	At our meeting last week no concerns were raised regarding the current arrangements for Culmstock		

Kentisbeare	01/08/23	Melanie Shore-Quinain	<p>Following up on our telephone conversation last week – we covered this at our last Parish Council meeting recently. It was considered that ideally Blackborough residents should voice their opinion and we understand that the public consultation will start shortly.</p> <p>It was however considered that if possible, the current arrangements should stay in place. The Parish Council felt that a change may discourage people from voting for various reasons; some people may not be able to take more time off to travel to vote for perhaps work reasons (agricultural workers, people working from home etc., in the village of Blackborough) and the Parish Council would not like to see anyone discouraged from voting.</p>		Keep Blackborough polling station
Kentisbeare	03/10/23	Malcolm Lewis-Jones	Elderly population. Many of whom do not drive. Covers a large area outside the village. Kentisbeare Village Hall over 2 miles away with a very long steep hill to climb. No public transport. So please retain the polling station in the village.		Keep Blackborough polling station
Kentisbeare	09/10/23	Edd Southerden	I strongly object to the proposed change of abolishing the Blackborough polling station and forcing residents to vote in Kentisbeare. This would effectively disenfranchise all residents who do not have ready access to a car as it is a 5 mile ,2 hour round trip on foot, with a 450ft climb. Anyone disabled, elderly or just without a driving licence in particular would be disadvantaged. Blackborough has had a polling station for many years which is well used. In the last GE there were 76 votes or 75% of the electorate, indicating it is well used by residents.		Keep Blackborough polling station
Kentisbeare	09/10/23	Sarah	Working from home it is much more convenient for me to have our village hall as a polling station. Otherwise I may struggle some times to vote. There are a number of elderly villagers that would struggle to travel to Kentisbeare to vote. Being on the village hall committee, we also appreciate the income generated from providing the hall as a polling station. For a small village, this is vital.		Keep Blackborough polling station
Kentisbeare	24/10/23	Heather Bingham	I understand you are thinking of closing blackborough polling station. I was told to email here if I want to keep it open, which I do.		Keep Blackborough polling station
Kentisbeare	29/10/23	Andrea Glover, MDDC Councillor	Please could we add our names to asking for the future of the polling station at Blackborough to remain open.		Keep Blackborough polling station

Sandford	11/10/23	Malcolm Vallance, Parish Clerk	As the Parish Council only met after your deadline (1st October) for submissions we are only just responding. Polling Area Sandford Polling Station Beacon Church New Buildings Sandford is one of the largest rural Parishes in Mid Devon. The suggestion that in future Parishioners from New Buildings travel to Sandford Parish Hall as thier Polling Station is unacceptable. There are current approx 172 names on the Register of Electors. This is far more than some small parishes in Mid Devon. For both of these reasons the Parish Council wish to object. We will be contacting the Parishioners at New Buildings to ask them to lodge their comments with you to meet your deadline of 12th November.		Keep Beacon Church polling station
Tiverton (Bolham)	23/10/23	Carol Rogers, resident	My husband and I are concerned about the proposal to have the voting station for Bolham residents in Cove village hall. It is only really accessible by car and parking is difficult. We understand that it is better for the school to to be used. However we have been happy using the van and the rooms at the Hartnoll hotel.		Keep Bolham polling station
Uffculme	27/07/23	John Poynton, MDDC Councillor	I an unconvinced by the collision argument, the Village hall is well sited with easy access for older people via Markers, parents go to and from school, and in the evening with people wandering down. I do not think people will bother walking to Magelake or even drive or encourage increased voting. It is psychological, but Magelake is out of the village in people's mind.		Don' t change to Magelake
Uffculme	15/09/23	Gemma Cole, Parish Clerk	I do not foresee any potential issues with this change.		Agree to change to Magelake

all areas	07/11/23	Derek Hearl, Liberal Democrats		<p>There is one small point I would like to make concerning the proposed new two- and three-part polling district letters.</p> <p>We agree that it is very sensible to use easily memorised two-letter codes for each of the three constituencies and for the various District wards within them. However, we do not like the idea of using letters for the third element where it exists. In our view it looks clumsy and inelegant and takes up more space. We would prefer a number suffix attached to the ward letters instead. Not only would this be tidier but it would be in line with practice elsewhere.</p> <p>For example, TM-CS1 instead of TM-CS-A for CA Bampton. TM-CS2 instead of TM-CS-B for CB Bampton (Shillingford). TM-CS3 instead of TM-CS-C for CV Morebath. or HS-HA1 instead of HS-HA-A for CF Butterlerigh and so on. It's a small point but one which I hope you will consider.</p>	Agree
Tiverton and Minehead Constituency	20/10/23	Duncan Sharkey, Acting Returning Officer Tiverton and	The ARO does not have any comments on the changes proposed	The ARO does not have any comments on the changes proposed	

## **Proposed withdrawal and dissolution of the Heart of the South West Joint Committee**

### **Summary**

1. This report follows a steer from the Leaders / senior members of several Constituent Authorities for proposals to be brought forward to all Constituent Authorities to consider their withdrawal and dissolution of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee (the Joint Committee).
2. The proposals in this report specifically relate to the Joint Committee's governance arrangements only and do not cover the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership or the associated HotSW Joint Scrutiny Committee.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Council agrees to serve notice of its withdrawal and that the Heart of the South West Joint Committee be dissolved on 31 December 2023.

### **Background**

3. In 2015 the HotSW partnership (17 local authorities, two National Parks, the LEP and three clinical commissioning groups) submitted a devolution "statement of intent" to Government and began negotiations about a devolution deal. However, following the EU referendum in 2016, devolution was no longer a government policy priority and the HotSW partnership developed a Productivity Strategy. In March 2018 the partnership formalised the arrangements to establish the HotSW Joint Committee. Following the establishment of Somerset Council, the HotSW Joint Committee Constituent Authorities are now:
  - Dartmoor National Park Authority
  - Devon County Council
  - East Devon District Council
  - Exeter City Council
  - Exmoor National Park Authority
  - Mid Devon District Council
  - North Devon Council
  - Plymouth City Council
  - Somerset Council
  - South Hams District Council
  - Torbay Council
  - Teignbridge District Council
  - Torridge District Council
  - West Devon Borough Council

The Heart of the SW LEP and the NHS are co-opted members of the HotSW Joint Committee.

4. The Joint Committee was seen a partnership vehicle to provide a single forum for local authority engagement with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and Government.

The specific objectives of the HotSW Joint Committee in its Terms of Reference are to:

- (a) Improve the economy and the prospects for the region by bringing together the public, private and education sectors;
  - (b) Increase our understanding of the economy and what needs to be done to make it stronger;
  - (c) Improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector;
  - (d) Identify and remove barriers to progress and maximise the opportunities / benefits available to the area from current and future government policy.
5. Since its inception, the Joint Committee's work has worked on issues covering the HotSW area as a whole such as: Local Industrial Strategy, Coastal Productivity Plan, Housing Task Force and regional imbalances.
  6. The Joint Committee currently has a meeting cycle of two formal meetings a year and it is directly supported by Somerset Council.

### **The case for change**

7. Changes in Government policy over the last five years, the development of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay devolution deal and forthcoming integration of the HotSW LEP into local authorities mean that the purpose of the Joint Committee has largely been superseded and other partnership arrangements between the Constituent Authorities can deliver their aims with reduced duplication.
8. In relation to withdrawal from/dissolution of the Joint Committee, the inter-authority agreement states that:
  - *A Constituent Authority wishing to withdraw from the Joint Committee shall give a minimum of 6 months' notice in writing to the other Constituent Authority via the Administering Authority. The Constituent Authorities shall co-operate with any such request.*
  - *If two or more Constituent Authorities give notice of withdrawal from membership of the Joint Committee in the same Financial Year, the Joint Committee shall consider and make recommendations to the remaining Constituent Authorities as to the future operation of the Joint Committee and, if appropriate, recommend any necessary amendments required to the Joint Committee's functions and operating arrangements.*
  - *Where a majority of the Constituent Authorities at any time agree (via formal resolutions) that the Joint Committee should be dissolved or*



*terminated on a specified date then the Joint Committee shall cease to exist from that date.*

9. In December 2022, the scheduled meeting of the Joint Committee was adjourned as it was not quorate due to low attendance by Constituent Authorities. On 27 October 2023, the scheduled meeting of the Joint Committee was also not quorate and able to proceed due to only four of the fourteen Constituent Authorities attending the meeting.
10. It is likely that proposals will be brought forward during November and December 2023 by a majority of the Constituent Authorities for their councils to agree to serve notice and recommend the dissolution of the Joint Committee on 31 December 2023.
11. **Recommendation**

**That the Council agrees to serve notice of its withdrawal and that the Heart of the South West Joint Committee be dissolved on 31 December 2023.**

#### **Reasons for recommendations**

- 12 Changes in Government policy over the last five years, the development of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay devolution deal and forthcoming integration of the HotSW LEP into local authorities mean that the purpose of the HotSW Joint Committee has largely been superseded and other existing partnership arrangements between the Constituent Authorities can deliver their aims. The HotSW Joint Committee is therefore considered to be superfluous and not adding value to the Constituent Authorities.

#### **Other options considered**

- 13 The alternative option is that the Council does not agree to serve notice and continues to be a member of the Joint Committee. However, if the majority of Constituent Authorities serve notice then the Joint Committee will be automatically dissolved. As stated previously it is considered that the Joint Committee is superfluous and adds duplication to existing arrangements.

#### **Financial and Risk Implications**

- 14 The Joint Committee remains completely reliant on the Constituent Authorities for its budget and there are no obvious sources of additional funding to support running costs or delivery of its work programme. Joint Committee members' costs and expenses are funded and administered by each respective Constituent Authority.
- 15 The Administering Authority (Somerset Council) holds the balance of contributions from the Constituent Authorities. The current unallocated balance

is £ 43,009. If the Joint Committee is dissolved, then any outstanding balance would be returned proportionally to each of the Constituent Authorities on the same percentage basis that they made contributions.

- 16 The key risk is continuing with the Joint Committee and duplicating the work of existing partnership arrangements without adding any value. The recommendations in this report mitigate that risk.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Risk Score</b>	<b>12</b>
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### **Legal Implications**

- 17 The HotSW Joint Committee is established under Sections 101 to 103 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 18 The review of the role and functions of the Joint Committee has taken account of the legal framework within which the Joint Committee operates. The proposed recommendations are in accordance with the Inter-Authority Agreement.

### **HR Implications**

- 19 There are no HR implications in agreeing these proposals.

### **Other Implications:**

### **Equalities Implications**

- 20 No specific equalities implications have been identified in relation to the proposed recommendations.

### **Community Safety Implications**

- 21 No specific implications have been identified in relation to the proposed recommendations.

### **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

- 22 No specific implications have been identified in relation to the proposed recommendations.

### **Health and Safety Implications**

- 23 No specific implications have been identified in relation to the proposed recommendations.

### **Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 24 No specific implications have been identified in relation to the proposed recommendations.

## **Social Value**

25 The decision is not related to a procurement process.

## **Background Papers**

Heart of the South West Joint Committee – establishment report to all Constituent Authorities in November and December 2017

Heart of the South West Joint Committee Governance Arrangements – 27 September 2019 and Budget Update report in October 2020

Heart of the South West Constitution and Inter-Authority Agreement

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