

Test Valley Borough Council Review of Polling District TE 2026

Background Document

1. Purpose of the Review

Test Valley Borough Council is required to ensure that polling districts, polling places and polling stations remain suitable, accessible and convenient for electors. This background document sets out the process for undertaking a minor review of polling arrangements within the Harroway No.3 (TE) Polling District.

2. Scope of the Review

The review will consider:

- The existing TE polling district and whether its boundaries remain appropriate.
- The polling place designated for the polling district.
- The suitability, accessibility and convenience of current and potential polling station locations.

The review will not consider changes to ward boundaries, parish boundaries or other administrative boundaries, as these fall outside the scope of a polling district review.

3. Background

For many years, electors within the TE polling district have been allocated to a temporary portacabin situated within the grounds of Harrow Way School. Recent changes to site security arrangements have resulted in restricted access for electors and reduced confidence in the long-term suitability of the venue.

The review has been prompted by issues experienced at the current polling station at Harrow Way School during the May 2026 elections. The school has introduced access-controlled gates and, as the school remains operational on polling day, electors were required to be admitted through the gates by school staff. This created accessibility concerns and generated complaints from polling station staff, electors and political parties.

Although the arrangements were successfully managed for the election, it is considered necessary to identify a more suitable long-term solution.

In light of these issues, the (Acting) Returning Officer has explored a number of alternative venues and arrangements and, in accordance with statutory requirements, has published his formal response setting out his views on the review proposals alongside the consultation documentation.

Initial investigations have identified several potential options, each with advantages and disadvantages relating to accessibility, capacity, parking provision, location and elector convenience.

4. Consultation Process

A four-week public consultation will be carried out. Consultees are invited to comment on:

- whether the existing polling district remains appropriate.
- whether the current polling station remains suitable.
- which alternative venue, if any, should be used in future.
- any alternative locations that may be suitable for consideration.

The consultation will be directed to:

- the relevant Borough Councillors
- the relevant Hampshire County Councillor
- Andover Town Council
- Political parties and election agents
- Disability and accessibility groups
- Local electors and other interested parties.

Consultation material is available on the Test Valley Borough Council website at www.testvalley.gov.uk/pdr2026 and includes:

- a map of the polling district and existing polling station.
- background information summarising the issues with the current arrangements.
- information relating to electorate numbers and accessibility considerations.

5. Assessment Criteria

Responses will be assessed against the following principles:

- Accessibility for all electors, including disabled voters.
- Convenience and proximity for electors within the polling district.
- Availability and suitability on polling day.
- Adequacy of parking and vehicular access.
- Capacity to accommodate expected elector numbers.
- Security and safety considerations.
- Long-term sustainability of the proposed arrangements.

6. Timetable

Milestone	Proposed Date
Publication of consultation	26 October 2026
Consultation closes	23 November 2026
Council consideration of recommendations	9 December 2026
Publication of approved changes and implementation	Following Council approval and in accordance with statutory requirements

7. Conclusion

The Council is undertaking a targeted review of polling arrangements within the TE polling district to identify a polling place and polling station that provide secure, accessible and convenient voting facilities for electors.

Following consultation, a final recommendation will be presented to a meeting of the full Council for determination, ensuring that future elections can be administered effectively and that electors are provided with suitable polling facilities.