



Parish/Town Election Cycles Consultation

Background

Swindon Borough Council has voted to change its election cycle from the voting by thirds model to whole council elections from May 2026. It will thenceforward hold its elections every four years after that (2026, 2030...). This will have an impact on those parish and town councils currently scheduled to hold elections in 2027 and 2028 as they will no longer be held as combined polls with the borough council elections. Therefore Swindon Borough Council resolved to seek the views of those parish and town councils as to whether it should use its power under Section 53 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) to harmonise those parish and town council elections with the new borough election cycle.

Which Parish and town Councils are affected?

The following table outlines the current election cycles for each of the parish and town councils within the Swindon Borough:

Year of next election(s)	
2024, 2028...	Bishopstone, Blunsdon, Central Swindon North, Covingham, Liddington, Nythe, Eldene & Liden, St Andrews and Wanborough
2026, 2030...	Castle Eaton, Hannington, South Marston and Stanton Fitzwarren
2027, 2031...	Central Swindon South (South Swindon), Chiseldon, Haydon Wick, Highworth, Stratton St Margaret, West Swindon and Wroughton

Therefore, for the benefit of doubt, those councils with elections currently scheduled for 2026 are unaffected by the borough council's move to whole council elections.

What are the cost implications for those affected?

The following table outlines the estimated current cost (as at October 2023) for those parish and town councils to hold a combined poll alongside the borough council (where costs are shared between the borough and the parish) as opposed to holding a standalone election:

Parish / Town Council	Current cost to parish of a combined poll	Estimated cost to parish of holding a standalone parish election	Combination saving
Bishopstone	£ 1,441.00	£ 2,601.00	£ 1,160.00

Blunsdon	£ 4,233.00	£ 7,488.00	£ 3,255.00
Central Swindon North	£ 29,672.00	£ 51,497.00	£ 21,825.00
Central Swindon South	£ 50,593.00	£ 83,239.00	£ 32,646.00
Chiseldon	£ 3,728.00	£ 6,216.00	£ 2,488.00
Covingham	£ 3,932.00	£ 6,861.00	£ 2,929.00
Haydon Wick	£ 22,974.00	£ 39,845.00	£ 16,871.00
Highworth	£ 7,368.00	£ 12,007.00	£ 4,639.00
Liddington	£ 1,553.00	£ 2,825.00	£ 1,272.00
Nythe, Eldene & Liden	£ 10,299.00	£ 17,875.00	£ 7,576.00
St Andrews	£ 13,352.00	£ 22,551.00	£ 9,199.00
Stratton St Margaret	£ 19,548.00	£ 31,520.00	£ 11,972.00
Wanborough	£ 2,197.00	£ 3,896.00	£ 1,699.00
West Swindon	£ 25,011.00	£ 40,497.00	£ 15,486.00
Wroughton	£ 8,452.00	£ 14,729.00	£ 6,277.00

What happens to the terms of office for those town and parish councils who want to harmonise polls?

As part of its power under the Act, Swindon Borough Council would seek to increase the term of office for those parish and town councils currently scheduled to hold elections in 2024 to a five year term of office (2021-2026) and thus avoid an election in 2024. Any casual vacancies within these councils occurring up to 8 November 2025 would be handled in the usual manner.

Swindon Borough Council would seek to reduce the term of office for those parish and town councils currently scheduled to hold elections in 2027 to a three year term of office (2023-2026).

Aside from costs, are there any other benefits to harmonising polls across the borough?

The main additional benefits are the ease to the elector of having one local polling day, increased turnout that a combination of local polls affords and the ability to synchronise the strategic decision making across the borough in respect of both the cycle of electing our representatives and in reducing the impact of multiple pre-election periods.

The Question

Does your council wish to harmonise its future elections with those of the new whole council borough cycle commencing in May 2026?

Responses should be emailed to Matt Box, Head of Elections and Democracy at Swindon Borough Council mbox@swindon.gov.uk and the deadline for responses is 12 noon on **Friday 15 December 2023.**