

Report of Director

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek committee approval to carry out a statutory review of polling districts and polling places for the Borough of Wellingborough. The outcome of the review would take effect following approval at the April 2018 council meeting.
- 1.2 To recommend proposals for polling districts, places and stations for all wards in the Borough of Wellingborough.

2 Executive summary

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), the council has a statutory duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It is also required to keep polling places and polling districts under review.
- 2.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a statutory duty on all local authorities to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years. The first full review under the legislation took place in 2014; each subsequent review must commence within 16 months of every fifth year.
- 2.3 Since 2007, the council has also kept the location of polling stations under review to ensure good accessibility for all electors, and is taking this opportunity to also review polling stations.

3 Appendices

- Appendix A: Definitions – polling districts, polling places, polling stations
- Appendix B: List of proposed polling districts, polling places and polling stations
- Appendix C: Maps of proposed polling districts and polling stations
- Appendix D: Terms of reference and a summary of the review process

4 The Committee is invited to:

RECOMMEND that:

- 4.1 **a statutory review of polling districts and polling places commence on 18 January 2018;**
- 4.2 **consultation commence on the proposed polling districts and polling places, as set out in this report, by the adoption of the terms of reference and the publication of the formal notice of review;**

4.3 a future report be made to the committee to consider representations received during the review.

5 Background

5.1 The council has a statutory duty to divide the electoral area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary elections and to designate polling places and polling stations for each of those districts. Definitions of polling districts, polling places and polling stations are included at Appendix A.

5.2 The law states that, as part of the review:

- (a) All the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- (b) So far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places the authority is responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

5.3 Since 2007, the council has also kept the location of polling stations under regular review to ensure good accessibility for all electors, and is taking this opportunity to review polling stations alongside polling districts and polling places. Following the parliamentary general election in 2017 much attention was paid to provision of facilities which allowed disabled electors to vote in person. A number of constituencies were criticised for not taking this into account.

5.4 The last full polling district and polling places review was completed in 2014 after a period of consultation with local stakeholders. This review was run to coincide with the publication of new ward boundaries for the borough after the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its final recommendations for the borough in February 2014.

5.5 It is proposed that the review takes place in 2018 rather than in 2019 because any changes can then be put in place before the borough and parish council elections in May 2019.

5.6 The existing ward boundaries for the Borough Council of Wellingborough and the parliamentary constituency boundaries are not part of this review. Parliamentary constituency boundaries are currently being reviewed by the Boundary Commission for England, with recommendations due to be laid before Parliament in September 2018.

6 Discussion

6.1 The council has a duty to follow a consultation procedure to identify polling districts and their associated polling places.

6.2 A key aspect is to review the current polling **districts** for the wards. These districts usually divide the wards for practical purposes, making it straightforward for the Acting Returning Officer to allocate electors to polling stations.

- 6.3 Attached as Appendix C is a map of each proposed polling district within each of the 16 wards of the borough. No changes to the existing polling district boundaries are recommended, but the identifying letters have been changed slightly in case the recommended changes to parliamentary boundaries go ahead. This will require the polling districts in this borough, but which are part of a different constituency, to be identified by a “W”.
- 6.4 It is clear from the maps that some of the existing polling districts are exceptionally small both in geographical size and electorate. This occurs where a borough ward boundary is not coterminous (e.g. they do not run along the same boundary lines) with the boundary for county electoral divisions. It is essential that people living in the ward and/or division receive the right ballot paper for their address at elections; such distinct boundaries will ensure that this is the case.
- 6.5 In respect of polling **places**, the recommendation is to continue the practice of nominating the entire polling district as the polling place in the majority of cases. This allows flexibility in case the nominated polling station becomes unavailable at the last minute. Only one polling place may be permitted for each polling district.
- 6.6 In some instances it is necessary to allocate a polling place which is outside the polling district because:
- (a) It is not viable to site a polling station in a settlement which only contains a very small amount of electors;
 - (b) There are no suitable premises with good access in the polling district.
- 6.7 Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the council under the Electoral Administration Act 2006, polling **stations** are chosen by the Acting Returning Officer for the election. It has been custom and practice to ask members for their views on the location of polling stations. The Acting Returning Officer has a statutory responsibility to site polling stations within the polling place.
- 6.8 The Acting Returning Officer has a duty to review the accessibility of all polling stations to disabled voters and ensure that they are accessible to disabled voters “so far as is reasonable and practicable”. For this reason it is unlikely that a polling station will be located in a property without disabled access, and portakabins will only be used if there is no alternative.
- 6.9 For a number of years the Acting Returning Officer has also followed the principles of limiting the use of schools as polling stations. This is not always possible because there is no feasible alternative, but the intention is to continue to do so as far as is possible so that young people’s education is not disrupted.
- 6.10 A list of proposed polling places and polling stations is therefore recommended at Appendix B. No change is proposed to existing polling places or polling stations, beyond the changes to the identifying codes specified above.

- 6.11 The polling district and places review does not have to take place over a specified period of time, but does need to ensure that sufficient time is available to carry out all steps of the process, as outlined in Appendix D.
- 6.12 The first stage, once the council has made the decision to carry out the review, is to publish a formal notice giving the details of the review and consultation arrangements.
- 6.13 Interested parties may make suggestions about changes to polling districts as part of the review. For example, a suggestion could be made that polling districts could be divided or merged.
- 6.14 The recommendations agreed by the committee after considering this report will form the basis of the consultation, and a further report will be made at the end of the consultation period so that members may determine what, if any, further changes should be made.
- 6.15 As in previous years the Acting Returning Officer will consult ward members before any changes are made to polling stations.

7 Legal powers

Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013).

8 Financial and value for money implications

It is anticipated that the proposals will not affect existing budgets. However, a sum may be required to make any changes following consultation to polling district, place and station names on stationery for registration and elections.

9 Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
No decision made at this meeting the commence review	Review cannot begin until later in the 2018 calendar year – delivery of 2019 borough/parish elections affected	Low	Consultation with interested parties, including borough council members
Decision made to identify individual premises as polling places	Inability to hold an election within the statutory period if the premises become unavailable at short notice.	High	Identify the whole polling district as polling place where possible Invite feedback on the location of the polling stations

10 Implications for resources

- (a) Time spent by officers on collating responses, writing reports and making amendments to records and the Register of Electors;
- (b) Time spent by ICT colleagues producing new maps identifying polling district and polling stations.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

- (a) Provision of voting facilities within reasonable distance of households;
- (b) Promote sense of community identity by the location of polling stations.

12 Implications for equalities

Provision of voting facilities which make it possible for all citizens to exercise their right to vote in person, if they so wish. An Equality Impact Analysis will be undertaken prior to commencement of the review.

13 Author and contact officer

Samuel Whiteley, Electoral Services Team Leader

14 Consultees

Bridget Gamble, Director
Karen Denton, Assistant Director

15 Background papers

None.

Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

Definitions:

Polling district

A geographical area created by the sub-division of a parliamentary constituency or ward, into smaller areas.

NB: each parish must be in a separate polling district.

Polling place

An area defined by the council within which the polling station is found.

NB: the polling place is designated by the council and could be a particular building or even the whole polling district.

Polling station

The physical location within the polling place in which the poll takes place (the room within a building, in which the actual vote is cast).

NB: Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the council, polling stations are chosen by the Acting Returning Officer for the election.

Appendix B

Ward	Polling District	PD Code	Polling Place	Electorate	Polling Station
Bozeat	Bozeat	AA	Polling district AA	1683	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Bozeat	Easton Maudit	AB	Polling district AA	77	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Brickhill	Brickhill No 1	BA	Polling district BA	1373	St Marks Church Hall, Brickhill Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 2	BB	Polling district BA	751	St Marks Church Hall, Brickhill Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 3	BC	Polling district BC	1082	Weavers Leisure Centre, Weavers Road
Croyland	Croyland No 1	CA	Polling district CA	1252	Wrenn Academy, Doddington Road
Croyland	Croyland No 2	CB	Polling district CB	2837	St Andrews Church Hall, Berry Moor Road
Croyland	Croyland No 3	CC	Polling district CC	1049	Ibis Hotel, Enstone Court
Great Doddington & Wilby	Great Doddington	FA	Polling district FA	1068	The Memorial Hall, Great Doddington, 42b High Street
Great Doddington & Wilby	Wilby	FB	Polling district FB	535	Wilby Primary School, Church Lane, Wilby
Hatton	Hatton No 1	HA	Polling district HA	785	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Hatton	Hatton No 2	HB	Polling district HA	64	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Hatton	Hatton No 3	HC	Polling district HC	798	Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, The Pyghtle
Hatton	Hatton No 4	HD	Polling district NB	1605	Salvation Army, Havelock Street
Irchester	Irchester	IA	Polling district IA	3572	Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road
Irchester	Little Irchester	IB	Polling district IA	270	Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road
Irchester	Irchester No 2	IC	Polling district FA	783	The Miller, 2 Millers Lane
Isebrook	Isebrook	JA	Polling district ND	1714	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Isebrook	Isebrook No 2	JB	Polling district ND	51	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Queensway	Queensway No 1	KA	Polling district KA	2509	Olympic Primary School, Olympic Way
Queensway	Queensway No 2	KB	Polling district KB	941	Glamis Hall, Goldsmith Road
Queensway	Queensway No 3	KC	Polling district KC	1731	Ruskin Infant School, Ruskin Avenue
Redwell	Redwell No 1	LA	Polling district LA	2706	Redwell Leisure Centre, Barnwell Road

Redwell	Redwell No 2	LB	Polling district LA	2498	Vicarage Farm Community Centre, 36 Grafton Close
Rixon	Rixon No 1	MA	Polling district MB	813	Ock 'n' Dough, Kidz Zone, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 2	MB	Polling district MB	1253	Ock 'n' Dough, Kidz Zone, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 3	MC	Polling district MD	528	The Hope Church, Guillemot Lane
Rixon	Rixon No 4	MD	Polling district MD	2070	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Rixon	Rixon No 5	ME	Polling district MD	498	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Swanspool	Swanspool No 1	NA	Polling district NA	1103	Scout Hut at Dale End, Croyland Road
Swanspool	Swanspool No 2	NB	Polling district NB	2232	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Swanspool	Swanspool No 3	NC	Polling district NB	85	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Swanspool	Swanspool No 4	ND	Polling district ND	101	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Victoria	Victoria	OA	Polling district OA	4662	Hindu Community Centre, 148 Highfield Road
Wollaston	Grendon	PA	Polling district PA	443	Grendon Village Hall, 52 Main Road
Wollaston	Strixton	PB	Polling district PC	32	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Wollaston	Wollaston	PC	Polling district PC	2749	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Earls Barton	Earls Barton	WDA	Polling district WDA	4464	Earls Barton Youth Club, Harrowick Lane
Finedon	Finedon	WEA	Polling district WEA	3558	Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge
Harrowden & Sywell	Ecton	WGA	Polling district WGA	413	Ecton Village Hall, 78A High Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Great Harrowden	WGB	Polling district WGE	78	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Hardwick	WGC	Polling district WGE	69	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Isham	WGD	Polling district WGD	648	Isham Independent Wesleyan Chapel School Room, Church Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Little Harrowden	WGE	Polling district WGE	715	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Mears Ashby	WGF	Polling district WGF	376	Mears Ashby Village Hall, 13 Vicarage Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Orlingbury	WGG	Polling district WGG	390	Orlingbury Village Hall, 15 Rectory Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Sywell	WGH	Polling district WGH	805	Sywell Village Hall, 33 Sywell
		TOTAL:		59819	