

Report of the Managing 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.
- 1.2 The review is due to commence on 12 August 2019, when public consultation would begin. The outcome of the review would take effect at the Register of Electors published on 1 December 2019, following a decision made at the Council meeting on 15 October 2019.
- 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) (RPA 1983), 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 (ERAA 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: Terms of reference and a summary of the review process

4 Council is invited to:

RESOLVE that:

- 4.1 **a statutory review of polling districts and polling places and public consultation on the proposals commence on 12 August 2019;**

- 4.2 **the terms of reference appended to this report be adopted;**
- 4.3 **a future report be made to council to consider the consultation responses of this 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 2018 after a period of consultation with local stakeholders. A review was run in 2018 as at this time it was believed that borough and parish elections would be going ahead in May 2019, and it was felt that the review should take place to implement changes prior to these elections.
- 5.5 This review is being held now in line with the statutory timeframe as per RPA 1983 and ERAA 2013.

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 list of each proposed polling district within each of the 16 wards of the borough.
- 6.4 In preparation for changes in local governance in Northamptonshire,

administrative changes are suggested to polling district codes to ensure that they do not clash with any designated polling district codes in other local authority areas in the North Northamptonshire area.

- 6.5 Following the Community Governance Review in 2018 establishing a new parished area for the town of Wellingborough, some new polling districts are required in the current Finedon and Harrowden & Sywell borough wards, as each parish is required by statute to be a separate polling district.
- 6.6 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 (i.e 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.
- 6.7 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.
- 6.8 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 number of electors;
 - (b) There are no suitable premises with good access in the polling district.
- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 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, and to continue to seek alternative sites where schools are in use.
- 6.12 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 identification of new polling districts in two wards, and the changes to the identifying codes specified above.

- 6.13 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 C.
- 6.14 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.
- 6.15 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.
- 6.16 The changes specified in 6.4 and 6.5 of this report will form this 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.
- 6.17 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 be completed prior to January 2020 – council is not compliant with statutory obligations	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

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 and planning 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

Liz Elliott, Managing Director
Karen Denton, Assistant Director
Julie Thomas, Monitoring Officer

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	Polling Station
Bozeat	Bozeat	WAA	Polling district WAA	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Bozeat	Easton Maudit	WAB	Polling district WAA	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Brickhill	Brickhill No 1	WBA	Polling district WBA	St Marks Church Hall, Brickhill Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 2	WBB	Polling district WBA	St Marks Church Hall, Brickhill Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 3	WBC	Polling district WBC	Weavers Leisure Centre, Weavers Road
Croyland	Croyland No 1	WCA	Polling district WCA	Wrenn Academy, Doddington Road
Croyland	Croyland No 2	WCB	Polling district WCB	St Andrews Church Hall, Berrymoor Road
Croyland	Croyland No 3	WCC	Polling district WCC	Ibis Hotel, Enstone Court
Great Doddington & Wilby	Great Doddington	WFA	Polling district WFA	The Memorial Hall, Great Doddington, 42b High Street
Great Doddington & Wilby	Wilby	WFB	Polling district WFB	Wilby Primary School, Church Lane, Wilby
Hatton	Hatton No 1	WHA	Polling district WHA	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Hatton	Hatton No 2	WHB	Polling district WHA	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Hatton	Hatton No 3	WHC	Polling district WHC	Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, The Pyghtle
Hatton	Hatton No 4	WHD	Polling district WNB	Salvation Army, Havelock Street
Irchester	Irchester	WIA	Polling district WIA	Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road
Irchester	Little Irchester	WIB	Polling district WIA	Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road
Irchester	Irchester No 2	WIC	Polling district WFA	The Miller, 2 Millers Lane
Isebrook	Isebrook	WJA	Polling district WND	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Isebrook	Isebrook No 2	WJB	Polling district WND	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Queensway	Queensway No 1	WKA	Polling district WKA	Olympic Primary School, Olympic Way
Queensway	Queensway No 2	WKB	Polling district WKB	Glamis Hall, Goldsmith Road
Queensway	Queensway No 3	WKC	Polling district WKC	Ruskin Infant School, Ruskin Avenue

Redwell	Redwell No 1	WLA	Polling district WLA	Redwell Leisure Centre, Barnwell Road
Redwell	Redwell No 2	WLB	Polling district WLA	Vicarage Farm Community Centre, 36 Grafton Close
Rixon	Rixon No 1	WMA	Polling district WMB	Ock 'n' Dough, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 2	WMB	Polling district WMB	Ock 'n' Dough, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 3	WMC	Polling district WMD	The Hope Church, Guillemot Lane
Rixon	Rixon No 4	WMD	Polling district WMD	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Rixon	Rixon No 5	WME	Polling district WMD	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Rixon	Rixon No 6	WMF	Polling district WMD	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Swanspool	Swanspool No 1	WNA	Polling district WNA	Scout Hut at Dale End, Croyland Road
Swanspool	Swanspool No 2	WNB	Polling district WNB	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Swanspool	Swanspool No 3	WNC	Polling district WNB	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Swanspool	Swanspool No 4	WND	Polling district WND	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Victoria	Victoria	WOA	Polling district WOA	Hindu Community Centre, 148 Highfield Road
Wollaston	Grendon	WPA	Polling district WPA	Grendon Village Hall, 52 Main Road
Wollaston	Strixton	WPB	Polling district WPC	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Wollaston	Wollaston	WPC	Polling district WPC	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Earls Barton	Earls Barton	WDA	Polling district WDA	Earls Barton Youth Club, Harrowick Lane
Finedon	Finedon	WEA	Polling district WEA	Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge
Finedon	Stanton Cross No 1	WEB	Polling district WOA	Hindu Community Centre, 148 Highfield Road
Finedon	Stanton Cross No 2	WEC	Polling district WMD	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Harrowden & Sywell	Ecton	WGA	Polling district WGA	Ecton Village Hall, 78A High Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Glenvale Park	WGB	Polling district WMB	Ock 'n' Dough, Farm Road
Harrowden & Sywell	Great Harrowden	WGC	Polling district WGE	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Hardwick	WGD	Polling district WGE	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Isham	WGE	Polling district WGD	Isham Independent Wesleyan Chapel School Room, Church Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Little Harrowden	WGF	Polling district WGE	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Mears Ashby	WGG	Polling district WGF	Mears Ashby Village Hall, 13 Vicarage Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Orlingbury	WGH	Polling district WGG	Orlingbury Village Hall, 15 Rectory Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Sywell	WGI	Polling district WGH	Sywell Village Hall, 33 Sywell

Review of polling districts and polling places: proposed terms of reference

Statutory requirements

Under Schedule 1A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), there is a requirement for a full review of polling districts and places to be undertaken for all parliamentary constituencies within 16 months of every fifth year, commencing with 1 October 2013.

Polling districts

The review will consider and propose polling districts with the aim of ensuring that:

- the borough is divided into polling districts;
- each polling district offers reasonable facilities for voting for all its electors, as far as is practicable in the circumstances;
- each parish is contained within one polling district.

Polling places

The review will consider and propose polling places with the aim of ensuring that:

- all electors in a constituency within the borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- polling places can provide polling stations which are suitable for use by all sections of the community, with appropriate access for disabled voters;
- polling places are located in an area of the polling district unless special circumstances make it necessary to designate an area that is wholly or partly outside the polling district;
- polling places are not so large that it is not clear to electors how they will be able to gain access to the polling station.

Review of polling districts and polling places: process

1. Report to Council with information in respect of polling district/polling place proposals
2. Publish notice of the intention to hold a review
3. Invite consultation with local groups and interested parties
4. Report to Council with recommendations following consultation
5. Final proposals published, together with all representations received*
6. Restructured register of electors published

* On completion of the review, the council is required to give reasons for its decisions in respect of the designation of both polling districts and polling places, and must publish:

- all correspondence sent to the Acting Returning Officer in connection with the review
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review
- the minutes of any meetings held
- details of the agreed designation of polling places and polling districts
- details of where the results of the review have been published.

Timetable for review

Action	Timetable	Date
Report to Council	Resolution made to begin statutory review and consultation	9 July 2019
Notice of Review, draft proposals and Terms of Reference published	Six-week public consultation period begins	12 August 2019
Acting Returning Officer representations published	During consultation period	1 September 2019
	Public consultation period closes	23 September 2019
Reviewed proposals reported to council	Final proposals considered at Council	15 October 2019
	Published	16 October 2019
Changes made to Register of Electors	Revision to register published	1 December 2019