

**Report of Head of Resources**

**REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To authorise the commencement of a statutory review of polling districts and polling places for the Borough of Wellingborough to take effect on 01 December 2014 when the new Register of Electors is published.
- 1.2. To recommend polling district boundaries within the new ward boundaries which will take effect for the elections in May 2015, together with polling places for each new polling district.

**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. A review must take place between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015. This has been delayed in Wellingborough until the results of the electoral review of the borough were known; the final recommendations were published on 25 February 2014 and, since then, work has been carried out on identifying and drawing draft polling district boundaries.
- 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 review polling stations following the European Parliamentary election on 22 May 2014.

**3. Appendices**

- 3.1. Appendix A outlines the definition of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.
- 3.2. Appendix B is made up of the maps showing the proposed polling district boundaries.
- 3.3. Appendix C sets out the recommended polling places and polling stations for each of the new polling districts.
- 3.4. Appendix D sets out terms of reference and a summary of the review process.

**4. The Committee is invited to:**

**RECOMMEND that**

- 4.1 proposed polling districts and polling places be published for the new wards in the borough, as set out in the report;**
- 4.2 consultation commence on the new polling districts and polling places 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 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), the council is required to divide its area into polling districts for the purposes of Parliamentary elections, and to designate polling places for each of those districts. Definitions of polling districts, polling places and polling stations are included at appendix A.
- 5.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a statutory duty on all local authorities to carry out and complete a review of polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015. The next review would then take place in the period of 16 months beginning with 1 October of every fifth year following.
- 5.3 The law states that the authority must seek to ensure that
  - 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 they are 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.
- 5.4 The review for this authority has been planned to coincide with the publication of new ward boundaries for the borough. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its final recommendations on 25 February 2014, with the expectation that they will be implemented at the next full council elections (7 May 2015).
- 5.5 Since 2007, the council has also kept the location of polling stations under review to ensure good accessibility for all electors. A review is carried out after every election. This is therefore an opportunity to consider any issues arising from the European Parliamentary election on 22 May 2014.
- 5.6 The last full polling district and polling places review was completed in 2012, after a period of consultation with local stakeholders.

## 6. Discussion

- 6.1. The council now has a duty to follow a consultation procedure to identify new polling districts and their associated polling places. Because of the timing of the ward boundary review, the European Parliamentary elections and the introduction of individual registration, the council has a relatively restricted period during which the review must be carried out. The new polling districts and polling places must be confirmed by 31 January 2015.
- 6.2. A key aspect is to review **polling districts** for the new wards. These are usually divided for practical purposes relating to allocating electors to polling stations.
- 6.3. Attached as appendix B are maps showing the proposed polling districts for each of the 16 new wards.
- 6.4. It is clear from the maps that some proposed polling districts are exceptionally small in both geographical size and electorate. These are being proposed as the solution where the borough ward boundaries do not run along the same boundary as the county electoral division (ie. they are not co-terminous). It is essential that people living in the ward/division receive the right ballot paper for their address; such boundaries will ensure that 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 can be permitted for each polling district.
- 6.6. In some cases it is necessary to identify a polling place which is outside the polling district because:
  - a. it is not viable to site a polling station in a settlement with few electors;
  - b. there are no premises with suitable 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 councillors for their views on the location of polling stations. The (Acting) Returning Officer has a statutory responsibility to allocate 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".
- 6.9. A list of proposed polling places and polling stations is therefore recommended at appendix C. This has taken account of feedback at the election on 22 May 2014, with the following key points being considered:
  - a. Wilby Working Mens' Club was unsuitable as a polling station; there is no suitable alternative venue apart from the school so the recommendation is

- to revert to the school;
- b. Earls Barton Methodist Church was unsuitable as a polling station; no suitable alternative venue could be found in the village so the recommendation is to revert to either the infant or junior school;
  - c. The portakabin at Cox's site, Westfield Road, was unsuitable in wet weather; a number of voters also complained that the building/yard was inhospitable and unpleasant. There are no alternatives in the area – except for the school – so the recommendation is to continue for a further year, but continue to review the situation.
  - d. The new site in Finedon (Independent Wesleyan Chapel) received only four complaints. As this provided the advantage of leaving the school open it is proposed that the polling station remains at the Chapel. Comparing turnout with the last European Parliamentary election in 2009 there was very little difference: 2014 was a few percentage points lower, but the election in 2009 was combined with county council elections and would be higher in any case.

6.10. The polling district and places review does not have to take place over a specified time period, but does need to ensure that sufficient time is available to carry out all steps of the process, as outlined in appendix D.

6.11. 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.

6.12. 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 further divided or merged.

6.13. 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 whether further changes should be made.

## 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 proposed changes will not affect existing budgets, although a sum will be required to make all the changes to ward and polling districts names on stationery for registration and elections.

## 9. Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
No decision made	Inability to complete	Low	Consultation with

at this meeting regarding recommendations for polling districts and polling places	the statutory process by 31 January 2015, and therefore non-compliance with legislation.  Inability to include changes in Register of Electors published on 1 December.		interested parties, including borough council members
Decision made to identify individual premises as polling places	Inability to hold an election within the statutory period	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 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.

### **13. Author and contact officer**

Bridget Lawrence, Head of Resources

### **14. Consultees**

Councillors  
Chief Executive  
Heads of Service  
Principal Democratic Services Manager  
Democratic Services Officers

### **15. Background papers**

Consultation documents and responses



## 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 C

Ward	Polling District	PD Code	Polling Place	Elector Numbers	Polling Station
Bozeat	Bozeat	AA	Polling district AA	1551	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Bozeat	Easton Maudit	AB	Polling district AA	67	St Marys Church Hall Bozeat, Allens Hill
Brickhill	Brickhill No 1	BA	Polling district BA	1307	St Marks Church Hall, Brickhill Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 2	BB	Polling district BB	1004	Weavers Leisure Centre, Weavers Road
Brickhill	Brickhill No 3	BC	Polling district BC	733	Cox site, Westfield Road
Croyland	Croyland No 1	CA	Polling district CA	1000	Wrenn Academy, Doddington Road
Croyland	Croyland No 2	CB	Polling district CB	2333	St Andrews Church Hall, Berrymoor Road
Croyland	Croyland No 3	CC	Polling district CC	893	Ibis Hotel, Enstone Court
Finedon	Finedon	EA	Polling district EA	3191	Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge
Great Doddington & Wilby	Great Doddington	FA	Polling district FA	1042	The Memorial Hall, Great Doddington, 42b High Street
Great Doddington & Wilby	Wilby	FB	Polling district FB	499	Wilby Primary School, Church Lane, Wilby
Hatton	Hatton No 1	HA	Polling district HA	729	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Hatton	Hatton No 2	HB	Polling district HB	742	Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, The Pyghtle
Hatton	Hatton No 3	HC	Polling district HC	1359	Salvation Army, Havelock Street
Hatton	Hatton No 4	HD	Polling district HD	71	Wellingborough Bowling Club, Hatton Street
Irchester	Irchester	IA	Polling district IA	3476	Irchester Village Hall, 36 School Road
Irchester	Irchester No 2	IB	Polling district	656	Cemetery chapel, Doddington Road, Wellingborough
Irchester	Little Irchester	IC	Polling district IC	548	Hilton Hall, Little Irchester, Milton Road
Isebrook	Isebrook	JA	Polling district JA	1125	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Isebrook	Isebrook No 2	JB	Polling district JB	48	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Queensway	Queensway No 1	KA	Polling district KA	2044	Olympic Primary School, Olympic Way
Queensway	Queensway No 2	KB	Polling district KB	806	Glamis Hall, Goldsmith Road
Queensway	Queensway No 3	KC	Polling district KC	1419	Ruskin Infant School, Ruskin Avenue



Redwell	Redwell No 1	LA	Polling district LA	2583	Redwell Leisure Centre, Barnwell Road
Redwell	Redwell No 2	LB	Polling district LA	2367	Vicarage Farm Community Centre, 36 Grafton Close
Rixon	Rixon No 1	MA	Polling district MB	779	Ock 'n' Dough, Kidz Zone, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 2	MB	Polling district MB	1073	Ock 'n' Dough, Kidz Zone, Farm Road
Rixon	Rixon No 3	MC	Polling district MC	521	Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, The Pyghtle
Rixon	Rixon No 4	MD	Polling district MD	1432	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Rixon	Rixon No 5	ME	Polling district ME	476	Hemmingwell Skills Centre, 113 Nest Farm Crescent
Swanspool	Swanspool No 1	NA	Polling district NA	937	Scout Hut at Dale End, Wellingborough Scout Hut, Croyland Road
Swanspool	Swanspool No 2	NB	Polling district NB	1640	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Swanspool	Swanspool No 3	NC	Polling district NC	90	The Castle Theatre, Castle Way
Swanspool	Swanspool No 4	ND	Polling district ND	79	The Tithe Barn, Burystead Place
Victoria	Victoria	OA	Polling district OA	3784	Hindu Community Centre, 148 Highfield Road
Wollaston	Grendon	PA	Polling district PA	442	Grendon Village Hall, 52 Main Road
Wollaston	Strixton	PB	Polling district PC	25	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Wollaston	Wollaston	PC	Polling district PC	2588	Wollaston Village Hall, 52 High Street
Earls Barton	Earls Barton	WDA	Polling district WDA	4025	Earls Barton Infant or Junior School, Broad Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Ecton	WGA	Polling district WGA	361	Ecton Village Hall, 78A High Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Great Harrowden	WGB	Polling district WGE	77	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Hardwick	WGC	Polling district WGE	73	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Isham	WGD	Polling district WGD	612	Isham Independent Wesleyan Chapel School Room, Church Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Little Harrowden	WGE	Polling district WGE	674	Little Harrowden Village Hall, 83 - 85 Main Street
Harrowden & Sywell	Mears Ashby	WGF	Polling district WGF	355	Mears Ashby Village Hall, 13 Vicarage Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Orlingbury	WGG	Polling district WGG	372	Orlingbury Village Hall, 15 Rectory Lane
Harrowden & Sywell	Sywell	WGH	Polling district WGH	701	Sywell Village Hall, 33 Sywell
		<b>TOTAL:</b>		52709	

## Appendix D

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

#### **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 Resources Committee with information in respect of new ward boundaries, draft polling district/polling place proposals and electorate information
2. Publish notice of the intention to hold a review
3. Invite consultation with local groups and interested parties
4. Report to Resources Committee 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.

