

Report of Head of Resources

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To report to members on the outcome of the consultation on the proposals relating to polling districts and polling places for the borough.
- 1.2. To make a final recommendation on 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 have now been approved by parliament.
- 2.3. The (Acting) Returning Officer also keeps 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. Feedback from members has been requested.

3. Appendices

The appendix to this report contains the final recommendations in respect of polling districts and polling places to Council, together with the recommendations on the location of the individual polling stations to be determined by the (Acting) Returning Officer.

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;**

RESOLVE to

- 4.2 **make recommendations to the (Acting) Returning Officer in respect of the location of individual polling stations as follows:**

- (a) Polling district IB: Miller public house function room;
- (b) Polling district KC: Ruskin Infant/Junior School;
- (c) Electors currently allocated to Glamis Hall: relocation to Olympic Primary School or Ruskin Infant/Junior School (as appropriate), should Glamis Hall close before 7 May 2014;
- (d) Polling district BC: Freemans School, following closure of the car wash site;
- (e) Polling district MC: Oakway Academy or Hemmingwell Skills Centre – recommend that this decision be deferred to allow further investigation to determine the most appropriate polling station location in order to maximise elector participation and to avoid a multiple ward polling station at Sir Christopher Hatton School.

5. Background

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 New ward boundaries for the borough have now been approved by parliament, and they will be implemented at the next full council elections (7 May 2015).
- 5.4 A review of polling stations is carried out by the (Acting) Returning Officer after every election in case improvements can be made. Matters arising from the last election (22 May 2014) have been considered as part of this report.

6. Discussion

- 6.1. At the meeting of the committee on 25 June 2014 it was recommended that the draft boundaries of polling districts and related polling places be consulted on in accordance with statute. This was approved by Council on 22 July 2014. The new polling districts and polling places must be confirmed by 31 January 2015.
- 6.2. **Consultation:** The notice of the review was published on the council's website, council offices and the library. Letters giving details of the consultation were sent to: the Returning Officer at Daventry District Council; community groups; councillors; political groups; parish councils; and current polling stations.

- 6.3. **Polling districts:** The proposed polling district boundaries were published as part of the consultation exercise in July 2014. Some proposed polling districts are exceptionally small in both geographical size and electorate. These have only been created in areas 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.
- 6.4. Only one comment was made about the polling district boundaries, and that was in respect of the size of some very small polling districts. The reason (as outlined above) was explained to the elector who was satisfied with the reasoning.
- 6.5. **Polling places:** The council consulted on the proposal to continue its practice of nominating the entire polling district as the polling place wherever possible. This would allow 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 was necessary to identify a polling place which was outside the polling district because:
- a. it was not viable to site a polling station in a settlement with few electors;
 - b. there were no premises with suitable access in the polling district.
- 6.7. No comments were received on the proposal regarding polling places.
- 6.8. **Polling stations:** 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.
- 6.9. 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".
- 6.10. A list of proposed polling places and polling stations was published and the following comments were made:
- a. Two councillors objected to electors from polling district IB (Irchester ward) being asked to vote in the Cemetery Chapel, Doddington Road;
 - b. Representations were made by the Chair of Governors at Ruskin Infant School, suggesting that the polling station be moved to St Mark's Church Hall or Glamis Hall so that the school would not be disrupted.
- 6.11. In addition to the comments received above, two further issues have come to light:
- a. A recommendation has been made to Council to close Glamis Hall on 31 December 2014 so this polling station would need to be relocated if the recommendation is accepted;

- b. The car wash site on Westfield Road is due to be redeveloped and may not be available in May 2015.

6.12. In the light of the above, the following proposals have been made to the (Acting) Returning Officer:

- a. **Polling district IB (Irchester):** this is an extension of the Irchester ward which now falls within the town. Four possible options were considered:
- Irchester or Little Irchester, but this would be some distance away;
 - Warwick Primary School, but this would be in polling district CB (Croyland) and would be contrary to the council's policy not to site polling stations in schools unless absolutely necessary;
 - the Cemetery Chapel, Doddington Road, but this would be in polling district CA (Croyland).
 - The Miller public house, Millers Lane, which has a separate function room that could be used as a polling station. This would be in polling district FA (Doddington & Wilby).
- b. **Polling district KC (Queensway):** electors from this area currently vote at Ruskin Infant School. The school has suggested transferring electors to St Mark's church hall or Glamis Hall. A commentary on Glamis Hall is set out below; St Mark's church hall is in the Brickhill Ward, and having electors from more than one ward in a single location is inadvisable unless absolutely necessary to prevent ballot papers getting mixed up. It should be noted that there will be additional polling stations within the building for the borough/parliamentary elections, so no space to accommodate electors from another area.
- c. **Polling district KB (Queensway):** electors from this area currently vote at Glamis Hall. If the building closes in December 2014, it will not be available as a polling station. There are no other public buildings within this polling district, so it is proposed that a portakabin is sited on the Glamis Hall car park, if required.
- d. **Polling district BC (Brickhill):** electors from this area currently vote in a portakabin on the car wash site on Westfield Road. This location was introduced in order to avoid use of Freemans School. It has become clear that this site is likely to be developed and will therefore no longer be available as a site for a portakabin. The only possible alternative is to use Freemans School.
- e. **Polling district MC (Rixon):** electors from this area currently vote at Sir Christopher Hatton School. Due to the new ward boundary arrangements, Sir Christopher Hatton School now falls outside the Rixon ward boundary, and is now located in Hatton ward. Having electors from more than one ward voting in a single location is inadvisable unless absolutely necessary to prevent ballot papers getting mixed up. There is only one room available for use at Sir Christopher Hatton School (the main hall). It is a high risk option to put polling stations for two separate wards in the one room. Two alternative options are:
- Hemmingwell Skills Centre; this is where other Rixon electors will vote,
 - Oakway Academy; this school has been used as a polling station in the past.

- 6.13. Given the limitations outlined above, the recommendation to the (Acting) Returning Officer in respect of the location of polling stations for the four polling districts affected is:
- a. **Polling district IB:** The Miller public house function room, Millers Lane;
 - b. **Polling district KC:** remain at the current location, but discuss the option of alternating between the infant and junior schools to reduce disruption;
 - c. **Polling district KB:** if the building is likely to be closed on 7 May 2015, erect a portakabin on the same site, then review future use;
 - d. **Polling district BC:** if the car wash site becomes unavailable before 7 May 2015 transfer the polling station to Freemans School.
 - e. **Polling district MC (Rixon):** Oakway Academy and Hemmingwell Skills Centre are both suitable venues for consideration as polling stations for polling place MC. Further investigations are needed in order to determine the most appropriate location for this polling station to maximise elector participation, and to avoid a multiple ward polling station at Sir Christopher Hatton School.
- 6.14. **The review - next steps:** The recommendations made by this committee will be made to full council. Council is responsible for determining the boundaries of polling districts and the location of polling places. Once those decisions have been made they will be publicised and the register of electors will be updated when published on 1 December 2015.
- 6.15. The location of polling stations has to be determined by the (Acting) Returning Officer. From a practical point of view he will need to make a decision on this before the end of the calendar year so that premises can be booked in good time to give sufficient notice to current users.

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 at this meeting regarding recommendations for polling districts and polling places	Inability to complete the statutory process by 31 January 2015, and therefore non-compliance with legislation.	Low	Feedback has been taken into account.

	Inability to include changes in Register of Electors published on 1 December.		
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 (Acting) Returning Officer takes account of representations in respect of individual 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
Those contacted in respect of the statutory consultation process
Chief Executive
Heads of Service
Principal Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officers

15. Background papers

Consultation documents and responses

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 (Freemans School, 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 FA	656	Miller Public House function room, Millers Lane
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 or portakabin on the same site
Queensway	Queensway No 3	KC	Pollingdistrict KC	1419	Ruskin Infant or Junior School

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	Oakway Academy OR Hemmingwell Skills Centre
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
		TOTAL:		52709	