

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 13(i)
28 JANUARY 2015	PUBLIC REPORT

Contact Officer(s):	Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive and Returning Officer Rachel Parnell, Compliance Manager (Elections)	Tel. 452390 Tel: 452277
---------------------	--	----------------------------

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, PLACES AND STATIONS

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

1. To inform Council of the compulsory requirement in conducting a statutory review of polling stations;
2. That, following the review, Council approves the Returning Officer's proposals in relation to the polling districts, places and stations as set out at Appendix 1;

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 It is a requirement of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, that the Council must conduct a compulsory review of the polling district, polling places and polling stations of Peterborough and North West Cambridgeshire constituencies that fall within the boundaries of the City of Peterborough.
- 1.2 The polling districts, places and stations that were subject to review are set out in Appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has a duty to regularly review the division of its parliamentary constituency area that fall within its boundaries into polling districts and the places where electors are asked to vote. The Council has a further duty to ensure that the most suitable premises are used as polling places with regard to the needs of the electorate, subject to availability
- 2.2 In addition to this, the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 has introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews. . This review must be conducted by the end of January 2015. Subsequent reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1st October of every fifth year after 1st October 2013.
- 2.3 The legislation lays down how the review is to be conducted. On commencement of the review the Returning Officer will be asked to make her representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The council will publish the Returning Officer's proposals and will invite comments. These proposals are set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 As part of a review the Council must seek to ensure (a) that all electors in a constituency in the city have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances and (b) that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place and polling station is accessible to electors who are disabled.
- 2.5 Any elector may make representations. The consultation also includes local political parties, district ward councillors, local MP's constituencies, police, parish councils, disability awareness groups and any other interested parties.

- 2.6 Once agreed, the proposals with details of the new polling districts and polling places were made available to the public at the Council Offices, in each of the Parliamentary constituencies and on the Council's website, along with the reasons for the decisions on the review and the designation of polling districts and polling places as a result of the review.
- 2.7 The review generated only one response which was in line with the review proposals. No action needs to be taken in relation to this single response.
- 2.8 This matter was intended to be reported to Council in December 2014, however given the different approach to the budget this year, the lack of response to this review and the timetable for authorization of these proposals, it was considered that this matter could be deferred until this meeting in January as this would allow for consideration of any potential impact to be assessed arising from the outcome of the boundary review. The boundary review recommendations were published on the 20 January and there are no additional matters to report.
- 2.9 The Council is therefore recommended to adopt the proposals of the Returning Officer as set out in the Appendix 1.
- 2.10 The timetable for this review:
- Notice of start of review – 17th October 2014
 Council publishes the Returning Officer's Proposals – 17th October 2014
 Consultation on this proposal ends on – 14th November 2014
 Review of proposals – to end of December 2014
 Report to Full Council – 28 January 2015
 Register of electors to be amended, accordingly – 31st January 2015.
- 2.11 It is important to note that the Electoral Commission could direct the Council to alter any polling arrangements that arise from the review and the Commission could make these alterations itself if the Council fails to respond within two months.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council must conduct a full review of its polling districts, polling places and polling stations by 31st January 2015, and every five years from 1st October 2013. However, this does not prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review in October 2018.
- 3.2 The Council has recently been subject to a ward boundary review by the Boundary Commission. The consultation period for this review closed on 6th October 2014. Final recommendations were published on 20 January 2015 and the review will be implemented by order subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The new electoral arrangements will be implemented for the elections in Peterborough in 2016 but must be preceded by a polling station review within the new wards before 2016. There is no direct impact upon this review arising from the ward boundary review.

4. LEGAL & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising from this review that are not dealt with in this report.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 All materials have been published as part of the report.