


Agenda Item No:	16	
Committee:	COUNCIL	
Date:	18 DECEMBER 2014	
Report Title:	POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW	

1 Purpose / Summary

To consider the outcome of the recent review of polling districts and places, as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

2 Key issues

- The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places, with a compulsory review having to be started and completed between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015;
- The last review was undertaken in November 2011;
- The Council has undertaken a consultation exercise on the proposals within the report and received a number of comments which have been taken into account in the final recommendations. All comments and responses are detailed in Appendix B;
- This review has no effect upon the number of electoral wards or councillors.

3 Recommendations

That the Council

- notes the outcome of the review and the consultation undertaken;
- agrees the changes recommended to polling districts and polling places, as detailed in the report at Appendix C;
- notes that a review of all polling districts and polling places will be undertaken at least every five years and delegates authority to the Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer to determine any changes necessary to polling districts or polling places within a ward, in the intervening period between formal reviews.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor John Clark, Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Elaine Cooper, Elections and Land Charges Supervisor Anna Goodall, Head of Legal and Governance
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Rob Bridge, Corporate Director Anna Goodall, Head of Legal and Governance Elaine Cooper, Elections and Land Charges Supervisor
Background Paper(s)	Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 Schedule A1, Representation of the People Act 1983 Consultation responses

4 Background / introduction

- 4.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 placed a duty on local authorities to carry out a full review of their Parliamentary polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2015. The same polling districts and polling places are used for local government elections.
- 4.2 In undertaking a review, the Council must:
- publish a notice indicating the holding of a review
 - consult the Returning Officer for every Parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area
 - enable any such Returning Officer to make representations to the authority and publish them in a prescribed manner
 - seek representations from such persons that it thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability
 - allow any elector in the authority's area to make representations which could include proposals for alternative polling places.
- 4.3 On completion of the review, details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public.
- 4.4 The definitions of polling district, polling place and polling station are:
- A **polling district** is the area created by separation of a ward, division or constituency into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to the electors
 - A **polling place** is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer
 - A **polling station** is the actual area where the process of voting takes place. This must be located within the polling place and designated for the particular polling district. This function is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

The Council is responsible for designating polling places, whereas the Returning Officer is responsible for determining where the polling stations are situated.

5 Considerations

- 5.1 When undertaking a review the Council is required to give due regard to the following considerations:
- It must seek to ensure that all electors in the area have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - It must seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to all electors.
- 5.2 A schedule of existing polling districts and polling places is set out in Appendix A.
- 5.3 The review takes into account the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) electoral review on the electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority. The LGBCE review resulted in a reduction of district wards from 27 to 24.
- 5.4 The review takes into account the outcome of the LGBCE's consideration of the Community Governance Review, which was undertaken in relation to the future parish warding arrangements of Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey to address boundary anomalies that resulted from the LGBCE electoral review.

The LGBCE agreed to the proposals for the district wards of Chatteris and Manea parishes to be co-terminous with the District Council wards for these areas, as such:

- Curlew and Birch now become just Birch AA1
- Curf and Slade Lode now become just Slade Lode, AB1
- Manea and How Fen now become just Manea, HA

The LGBCE did not agree to the proposals to make Whittlesey town wards co-terminous with the Bassenhally and St Andrews district wards. The proposals for these town wards remains as follows:

- Bassenhally District Wards spilt into three town wards of Bassenhally (DA1), Elm (DA2) and Delph (DA3)
- St Andrews District Ward spilt into two town wards of St Andrews (DC1) and St Marys (DC2).

6 Effect on corporate objectives

6.1 Quality Organisation:

- this review fulfils the Council's legal obligations under The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013
- the review ensures voter engagement is maximised in the democratic process by establishing polling stations that electors deem suitable and accessible.

7 Community impact

7.1 The Council undertook a formal consultation period from 1 September to 24 October 2014. A public notice of the holding of the review was displayed on the Council's website, Fenland@YourService shops/community hubs and business reception. In addition, the following specific consultations were undertaken with:

- all members of Fenland District Council
- the Returning Officer(s) for East Cambs District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council
- the Member of Parliament and the Members of European Parliament for the Eastern Region
- Members of East Cambs District & Cambridgeshire County Council representing wards within the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency area
- all the Clerks for Town / Parish Councils in the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency area
- organisation which have particular expertise regarding access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability including Camsight, The Varrier-Jones Foundation, Age UK, Fenland Association for Community Transport Ltd, Fenland Area Community Enterprise Trust, Caerus Care Ltd, Papworth Trust, Wisbech St Raphael Club, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust & East Cambs Access Group
- Candidates and Election Agents who acted at the 2011 District and 2013 County Council elections.

7.2 In addition, polling station inspectors at the European Parliamentary Election held in May 2014 were asked to provide feedback regarding each of the current polling places.

7.3 31 interested parties responded to the consultation and the comments and responses are reported at Appendix B.

7.4 Election officers have visited the potential new polling station venues and consider them to be suitable.

7.5 The proposed changes to the current polling districts and polling places are detailed in Appendix C.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Council is asked to agree the recommended Polling Districts and Polling places outlined in the report, subject to members agreement details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public. Specified interested parties may make representations to the Electoral Commission to reconsider any polling districts and polling places.

8.2 The new electoral register containing revised arrangements for polling districts will be published on 9 February 2014. New polling districts and polling places will become effective at elections held after this date.