

Appendices:
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GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	17 th September 2019
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary

1. Purpose

1.1 To present to the Committee recommendations from the Local Returning Officer relating to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places under The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 and seek the Committee's comments before the commencement of formal consultation.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes the representations of the Local Returning Officer and the public consultation that will now take place.

2.2 That the Committee makes any comments on the Local Returning Officer's proposals that it would wish to inform the consultation.

2.3 That the Committee notes that final recommendations will be brought to a meeting of the Committee on the 5th November 2019.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The introduction of The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires each local authority to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places every fifth year after 1st October 2013.

- 3.1.2 The scope and methodology of the review and consultation was agreed by General Purposes committee on 18th March 2019
- 3.1.3 The attached proposals have also been shaped by representations made around the May 2019 elections, reports from Polling staff at the May 2019 elections, informal preparatory consultation, and inspections of existing and potential Polling Places. The process of consultation and inspection will continue during the rest of the review period.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

- 4.1.1 Additional resources will be required to manage and run any additional Polling Stations. European, National, Police, County and Parish elections, ballots and referendums are not funded by the Borough Council but costs are reclaimed from the responsible body. The Borough Council is responsible for its own elections and for specified local ballots such as Community Planning Referendums or any Mayoral Referendum.
- 4.1.2 The number of Polling Stations within each Polling Place is a matter for the discretion of the Returning Officer at each election. In the attached recommendations a number of Polling Districts are identified as potentially having two Polling Stations.
- 4.1.3 The costs of establishing a larger number of Polling Places, with attendant increase in Polling Stations, will depend on the nature and costs of the Polling Places used and the size of the Polling Stations. Under Electoral Commission guidance there are minimum staffing levels depending on the number of voters in person at each Polling Station. It does not therefore follow that one Polling Station becoming two is double the cost, it is usually less than double.
- 4.1.4 The arrangements proposed in this paper will be reviewed again in 2023, or when the new Parliamentary Boundaries or Unitary Wards come into effect.

4.2 Legal

- 4.2.1 Formal guidance from the Electoral Commission is being followed for the review which ensures that all parts of the legislation are adhered to.

4.1 Equality

- 4.1.1 Advice has been sought from specialist groups and agencies relating to access needs of protected groups, specifically those with a disability.
- 4.1.2 Full inspections of Polling Places have taken place which included accessibility and incorporated any initial advice given by the groups above.

4.2 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.2.1 Consultation has been carried out informally and will now be carried out formally in relation to these proposals.

4.2.2 Compulsory consultees are stated in the guidance issued by the Electoral Commission and include the following:

- Candidates and agents for the parliamentary, local and Parish elections
- Elected representatives (County Councillors, MEP's etc)
- (Acting) Returning Officers from neighbouring authorities (e.g. South Northamptonshire)
- Electors
- Council officers with relevant experience

4.3 Other Implications

4.3.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places files and records, held by the Borough Secretary's department.

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Local Returning Officer