

Appendices:  
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**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Committee Meeting Date:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Chief Executive

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Recommendations

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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 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

- 3.1.2 Although the Council completed a review in 2013, following representations made to the Electoral Commission that the review had not been completed fully, the Commission requested that a further full review be conducted as soon as possible..
- 3.1.3 The Local Returning Officer initiated a full and comprehensive review of Polling Districts and Polling Places immediately following the Parliamentary and Local Elections held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and the processes outlined by this report and being undertaken by the Local Returning Officer and the Council comply with the Electoral Commission's request referred to in 3.1.2 above.
- 3.1.4 The scope and methodology of the review and consultation was agreed by General Purposes committee on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015.
- 3.1.5 The review is being conducted and informed by legislative requirements and extant guidance from the Electoral Commission. Broadly, there is a requirement for the Council to take certain steps in conducting the review. This includes the publication of a notice; comments on proposed polling stations by the Local Returning Officer and broad consultations with a number of stakeholders, particularly those organisations or groups with expertise in disability related issues. These processes have been followed fully and the review informing the Local Returning Officer's report have been comprehensive.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Resources and Risk**

- 4.1.1 Additional resource will be required to manage and run any additional Polling Stations required following any proposed reductions in size of some Polling districts. 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 Additional cost will be incurred by increasing the number of polling places.

### **4.2 Legal**

- 4.2.1 The review has to be conducted in accordance with various legislative provisions, including the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. Formal guidance from the Electoral Commission, entitled Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations is being followed closely

### **4.1 Equality**

- 4.1.1 Access to polling districts, places and polling stations is central to the review and recommendations. 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 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 held on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- Elected representatives (County Councillors, MEP's etc)
- Local Returning Officers from neighbouring authorities (e.g. South Northamptonshire)
- Disability Groups
- Political Parties
- Electors
- Council officers with relevant experience

#### **4.3 Other Implications**

4.3.1 None

### **5. Background Papers**

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

5.2 EC Guidance, "Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations".

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