

Appendices:

- 1) Review of West Hunsbury Ward and New Duston Ward
- 2) Representation of Peoples Act

**Appendices:**

- 3) Notice of Interim Review
- 4) Map 1
- 5) Map 2

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places for West Hunsbury and Old Duston Wards
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	15 November 2016
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present to the Committee recommendations from the Returning Officer relating to the polling arrangements in the Wards of West Hunsbury and Old Duston.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Returning Officer be authorised to administer the Review and publish the attached Notice.
- 2.2 That the Returning Officer be authorised to designate Districts and Polling Places within the West Hunsbury and Old Duston Wards to suitable venues.
- 2.3 That the Ward of West Hunsbury be divided into two Polling Districts SNWH1 and SNWH2, the Polling District boundary to follow the County Council boundary.
- 2.4 That the Polling Place for NSOD3 and NSOD4 in Old Duston Ward be Duston United Reform Church.

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 five years. This compulsory review was carried out in 2014. And a further review was carried out in 2015.
- 3.1.2 The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) (Section 18C (5) and Section 31) allows a local authority to conduct an interim review of any Polling District, Polling Place or Polling Station within its area, outside of the timescales for a compulsory review. In this instance the Council is not intending to consider a review of all its Polling Districts, Polling Places or Polling Station within its area. Having considered the review of 2015, the current review is confined to West Hunsbury and Old Duston
- 3.1.3 The Ward of West Hunsbury is divided into two Polling Districts, SNWH1 and SNWH2. However, the County Division boundary is not coterminous with the West Hunsbury Ward boundary and passes through the centre of the ward dividing both the polling districts of SNWH1 and SNWH2 (Map 1). This means that some of the electors in each polling district would be voting in the other polling district for the County Council election on 4th May 2017. The County Council election is the only election that would be affected by this.
- 3.1.4 The Ward of Old Duston is divided into five Polling Districts. The Polling Districts NSOD3 and NSOD4 are allocated to St Lukes Community Centre as a result of the 2015 Review (Map 2). Representations were received at the 2016 EU Election that the slope up to the Community Centre was too much of a slope for some voters.
- 3.1.5 The Electoral Commission has produced guidance in its document 'Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations', which states that the Council can carry out an interim review outside of the 5-year cycle for a compulsory review. The process for an interim review is not stated in legislation. The Electoral Commission guidance suggests that not following a full review process leaves an authority open to potential challenge, as it could be difficult to evidence the decision and show how the views of disabled persons and the reasonable requirements of electors were taken into account. The process described in this report will allow requirements to be met.
- 3.1.6 To aid understanding of the report and appendices the following definitions will assist:-
- **Polling District:** a geographical area created by the sub-division of a constituency, ward or division onto smaller parts.
 - **Polling Place:** the building or area in which the Returning Officer will select polling stations.

- **Polling Station:** Chosen by the Returning Officer for the election, a polling station is the room or building within the polling place where the poll will take place.

A timetable is attached at **Appendix 1**.

- 3.1.7 Local authorities are required to divide their area into polling districts for elections and to designate a single polling place for each polling district. Polling places should be within the polling district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area outside the district. When conducting a statutory review of polling districts, places and stations, local authorities must follow rules set out in Schedule A1. Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983. Schedule A1 is included in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.1.8 The responsibility for finalising the polling stations for each election rests with the Returning Officer for that election.
- 3.1.9 There are five potential stages to this particular review:
- Notification of the review
 - Administration of the review
 - Consultations
 - Conclusion
 - Appeal

Proposals

The Ward of West Hunsbury be divided into two Polling Districts SNWH1 and SNWH2 the boundary between the two polling districts to follow the County Boundary line.

The Ward of Old Duston polling districts NSOD3 and NSOD4 be allocated to Duston United Reform Church.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

- 4.1.1 No additional cost will be incurred as the polling stations are already in place for the County Council elections.
- 4.1.2 The review process enables the Council to carry out the Review, although no detailed prescribed review process is identified in legislation. However, the process described is robust and provides for input by interested parties and a mechanism for an appeal should there be a challenge.

4.2 Legal

- 4.2.1 The interim Polling Place and Polling District Boundary Review will follow the full review process.

4.3 Equality

- 4.3.1 Full inspections of Polling Places have taken place which included accessibility and incorporated any initial advice given.

4.4 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.4.1 All consultees who responded to the Poling Place consultation in 2015 will be notified.

Any elector in the local authority area can make representations on the Returning Officer's proposals.

The consultation period will be three weeks.

4.5 Other Implications

- 4.5.1 None

4.6 Future Reviews

- 4.6.1 Northampton will undergo another full statutory review in 2018/19. Legislation requires that all polling stations be kept under consideration and evaluation. If changes are identified as being desirable then the interim review process should be initiated.

5. Background Papers

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

Diana Bowden: Elections Manager
01604 837111