

**Public**  
**Key Decision - No**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Polling Districts and Polling Places Review – 2024

**Meeting/Date:** Corporate Governance Committee – 24th January 2024  
Council – 21st February 2024

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services - Councillor M A Hassall

**Report by:** Elections and Democratic Services Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All

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### **Executive Summary:**

Each authority is required to undertake a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area on a regular basis. The last full review was undertaken in October 2019 and an interim review undertaken in 2019. It is now necessary to carry out the next scheduled review which needs to be completed between 1st October 2023 and 31st January 2025. The results of the formal consultation exercise detailing the representations made are summarised in the report.

### **Recommendation:**

The Committee is

### **RECOMMENDED**

**to note the outcome of the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review and consultation undertaken.**

The Committee

### **RECOMMENDS**

**that the Council approve the Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024 as appended to the report now submitted.**

The Council is

### **RECOMMENDED**

**that the Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024 as appended to the report now submitted be approved.**

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint members with details of the process involved with a statutory review of polling districts and polling places within the District and consider details of the representations made during the formal consultation process before recommending approval by the Council the Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Electoral Commission Act 2006, as amended, placed a duty on each authority to undertake a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area on a regular basis. The last such review was completed in 2019. It is now necessary to carry out the next scheduled review which needs to be completed between 1st October 2023 and 31st January 2025.
- 2.2 All wards within Huntingdonshire are divided into polling districts which form the basis upon which the register of electors is produced. Most are defined by parish boundaries, but there are exceptions. The Council is responsible for dividing its area into polling districts and for keeping polling districts under review. The Council must also define a polling place for each of its polling districts within which the polling station is located.
- 2.3 Details of the process of consultation and timetable was presented to the Committee on 27th September 2023 and the Committee authorised the commencement of the polling districts and polling places review in accordance with the consultation document.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 A formal consultation exercise was undertaken and hosted on the Council's website from 2nd October 2023, running until 27th November 2023, whereby all residents, County and District Councillors, MPs, Town and Parish Councils, Returning Officers, Political Agents/parties and local disability groups were asked to make comments on the existing arrangements for polling places and polling stations.
- 3.2 A small number of proposed changes were set out in the consultation document and focussed on –
- a) Creation of a new polling district for Lady Olivia Centre, Brampton
  - b) Merging polling districts FG and FK - Stow Longa
  - c) Merging of polling districts DZ and EA - St Ives North
  - d) Creation of a new polling district for Wintringham Park, St Neots
  - e) Creation of a new polling district for Bearscroft, Godmanchester
- 3.3 A total of 7 responses were received and detailed at Appendix A in the Consultation Responses Schedule. Arising from the representations

made the changes outlined in a) – d) are being confirmed as proposals for approval and in response to two representations made in respect of the proposal for Godmanchester, the responses confirmed that no changes were required to the current arrangements of polling districts or polling places. The concerns highlighted by St Neots Town Council in respect of electoral arrangements surrounding the town wards is out of scope of this review and will be investigated further after the review.

- 3.4 The revised Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places is detailed at Appendix B.

#### **4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 4.1 Failure to consider all representations fully and complete the review to decide on the most appropriate polling districts and polling places may not allow the Returning Officer to run effective elections. An early review of polling arrangements in the District will reduce the risk of election failure, particularly in light of a short notice Parliamentary election scheduled in 2024.

#### **5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Polling districts will be updated for the register of electors and affected polling districts will be re-published for 1st March 2024 update to the register.

#### **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The requirement to undertake a polling districts and polling places review aligns with Priority 3: Delivering good quality, high value-for-money services with good control and compliance with statutory obligations as set out in the Corporate Plan 2023-2028.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The process for a polling district and places review is set out in Schedule A1, Representation of the People Act 1983 and the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

#### **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 8.1 The Council must undertake a review of the polling district and polling places within a period of 16 months that starts on 1st October of every fifth year after 1st October 2013. The adequacy and suitability of polling stations is regularly reviewed to ensure that premises remain suitable and accessible for electors. The Council is required to approve the Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places to ensure the effective delivery of elections following feedback received during the consultation period.

8.2 The Corporate Governance Committee has responsibility to consider periodic electoral reviews and review of District and Parish electoral arrangements including boundaries and other electoral matters. This report provides the Committee with details of the outcome of the consultation exercise that was undertaken.

## **9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix A - Consultation Responses Schedule

Appendix B - Schedule of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Review of Polling Districts, polling places and polling stations guidance – The Electoral Commission.

Corporate Governance Committee - Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 (27th September 2023)

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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