

## COUNCIL

6 November 2023

# REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2023

### Report of the Chief Executive

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr Gale Waller, Leader of the Council	
Contact Officer(s):	Angela Wakefield, Strategic Director for Law & Governance	01572 758450 awakefield@rutland.gov.uk
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Ward Councillors	All	

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the compulsory review of polling districts, polling places, and polling stations.
2. Approves the changes of polling places and polling stations recommended by the Returning Officer at section 12 of this report.

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the recommendations of the Returning Officer (Chief Executive) shown below, and to conclude the compulsory review of polling districts and polling places.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Council to conduct compulsory reviews on a 5-yearly cycle. The current review commenced on 1 October 2023 and is carried out to make sure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable. The Council also has a duty to keep those arrangements under review.
- 2.2 Between compulsory reviews, all polling places and polling stations used are kept

under consideration, following each election. The Chief Executive has specific delegation in the Rutland County Council Constitution to amend the Polling Place Scheme between reviews.

- 2.3 For ease of reference Appendix A contains a definition of terms relating to polling place reviews taken from the Electoral Commission's guidance.
- 2.4 A change of polling place and polling station are required for the polling district of Barrowden because the current venue is due for demolition and rebuild. Full details can be seen in Appendix B.
- 2.5 The list of current polling districts, polling places and polling stations, along with electorate figures is shown at Appendix C. The recommended revised list of polling districts, polling places and polling stations is shown at Appendix D. Under current arrangements, all designated polling places are the buildings within which polling stations are situated. The proposed new polling places arrangements will offer greater flexibility by designating areas within a polling district. In the case of Barrowden, for example, this will allow the use of a temporary polling station within the polling place and will allow us to revert to the permanent polling station venue when that is rebuilt.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Public notice of the review was given on 1 October 2023. The documents made available for public inspection included information about the review process, current electorate figures, ward maps showing existing polling districts and details of the current and provisional revised polling places and polling stations. Details of venues and the consultation documentation were also posted on the Council website. A copy of the consultation letter and accompanying documentation is attached at Appendix E.
- 3.2 This information was also supplied directly to specific consultees including: relevant ward members, the Acting Returning Officer for the current UK Parliamentary constituency, political parties, parish clerks and parish representatives, third sector organisations, including groups representing the disabled and key holders of polling stations (to identify any development or refurbishment plans which could impact on the availability of premises).
- 3.3 No objections have been received from those specifically consulted, or from members of the public. All consultation responses have been collated at Appendix F. Suitability and convenience for the electors were the principal criteria when reviewing polling places.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 All existing polling districts, polling places and polling stations, remain suitable and provide reasonable facilities for voting and are accessible to electors with disabilities.
- 4.2 In the polling district of Barrowden, the existing polling place is due to be demolished and rebuilt and will not be available for a period up to a year. Therefore, a new polling place and polling station are required. Details of the new polling stations and the alternatives considered are shown at Appendix B.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Other than inflationary increases overall hire costs for premises will not be adversely affected (there are no charges for the use of Ketton and Oakham libraries which are Council owned buildings). Planned elections normally take place in May, however snap or unplanned elections taking place in winter months may incur additional heating costs.
- 5.2 At scheduled Ordinary elections the Council continues to meet the costs of the hire polling stations, and where parish elections are held concurrently, the parishes concerned share the hire costs.
- 5.3 For parish by-elections all polling station costs will be met by the parish concerned.
- 5.4 For Police and Crime Commissioner and Parliamentary elections the council recovers the costs of hiring polling stations from the Electoral Claims Unit.

## **6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The review has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the guidance issued by the Electoral Commission.

## **7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 No Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required for this report as no personal data was processed in the preparation of this report.

## **8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found. A copy of the EqIA can be obtained from the elections office at: [elections@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:elections@rutland.gov.uk).

## **9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Changes to the polling place for Barrowden, and adoption of a new polling station for the electorate, albeit on a temporary basis until the existing Village Hall has been rebuilt, mean that the polling place will become Barrowden and the new station is within half a mile of the current one, which will cause minimal disruption to the electorate.

## **10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no major adverse health and wellbeing implications.
- 10.2 The polling station for the electorate in Barrowden will move temporarily but remains in the village.

## **11 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no environmental or Human Resource implications.
- 11.2 There are no procurement implications as the cost of hire of the new venue in Barrowden will be similar to that of the original venue, the Village Hall.

## **12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 It is considered that the majority of polling districts and polling places remain fit for purpose and represent the best possible solution for the electorate in most areas.
- 12.2 Electors in Barrowden will be unable to use the Village Hall during its rebuild and the only suitable alternate venue is St Peter's Church in the village of Barrowden.
- 12.3 It is therefore recommended that the polling place for the electors of Barrowden will become the Village of Barrowden and the polling station for the duration of the Village Hall rebuild project will become St Peter's Church, Barrowden. Once the rebuild is complete the Returning Officer will arrange an inspection to confirm if the Village Hall can be reinstated as the permanent polling station for Barrowden.

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1 There are no background papers to the report.

## **14 APPENDICES**

- 14.1 Appendix A – Definition of Terms.
- 14.2 Appendix B – Arrangements for electors in Barrowden.
- 14.3 Appendix C – Existing polling districts, polling places and polling stations.
- 14.4 Appendix D – Recommended revised list of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.
- 14.5 Appendix E - Example letter to stakeholders and supporting documentation (includes copies of polling place/district evaluation checklists).
- 14.6 Appendix F – Comments from Stakeholders.

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**