

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Returning Officer

REPORT NO: LDS195

DATE: 17 November 2016

TITLE:	<i>Interim Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places</i>	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Statutory requirement	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright – Executive Member, Governance	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Julie Edwards, Elections and Democratic Services Team Leader j.edwards@southkesteven.gov.uk ; Tel : 01476 406080 ext 1207	
INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Equality and Diversity	Carried out and referred to in paragraph (7) below.	Full impact assessment Required: N/A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18808&p=0 Electoral Commission Guidance on the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews Acting Returning Officer's draft proposals http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18807&p=0 Communities PDG action notes 1 September 2016 http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/g3355/Printed%20minutes%2001st-Sep-2016%2014.30%20Communities%20Policy%20Development%20Group.pdf?T=1 	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is recommended that:
 - 1.1 Council approve the proposals setting out changes to polling districts, polling places and polling stations as detailed at Appendix 1.
 - 1.2 These revised polling districts and polling places take effect from the republication of the Electoral Register on 1st February 2017.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each of these districts. The Council reviewed all of its polling districts and places as part of a compulsory review under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in 2014. The next compulsory review must take place between October 2018 and January 2020.
- 2.2 In the intervening period between compulsory reviews the Council is required to keep polling arrangements under review. As the Local Government Boundary Commission for England has carried out a review of the electoral arrangements for Lincolnshire County Council, an interim review has been carried out to ensure our polling districts reflect the new County Division boundaries. The revised divisions will come into effect from the County Council elections in May 2017. The subsequent changes to parish wards will take effect from the next ordinary Parish and Town Council elections in 2019.
- 2.3 The original intention was to implement the boundary changes when the electoral register is published on 1 December 2016 however the Order changing the boundaries will not be made until 9 December 2016. As a result the Register will be required to be published on 1 December 2016 and subsequently revised to reflect the new divisions and polling districts. The revised version will then be republished on 1 February 2017.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Background

- 3.1 Polling Districts are, in effect, sub divisions of electoral wards. Each parish or parish ward is automatically a polling district in its own right but then that area can be broken down into further polling districts dependent on the size of the parish and the number and location of the electors. Responsibility for determining polling district boundaries lies with the Council itself.

- 3.2 The Council must designate a polling place for every polling district. In determining where polling places should be located the Council must seek to ensure that all the electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances and that, so far as is reasonable and practical, polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.
- 3.3 As a result of the division boundary changes it has been necessary for a small number of changes to be made to the polling district boundaries and polling places for some voters. The proposals aim to keep changes to a minimum. In addition, minor modifications are proposed to the polling districts within Deeping St. James to reduce the number of electors that currently vote at Deeping Community Centre.
- 3.4 A schedule of the proposals outlined in this report together with the polling arrangements for all polling districts within the district are detailed on the Schedule of Polling Places attached at **Appendix 1**. Any changes to the current polling place arrangements are identified in the proposal column of the schedule.

Review and Consultation Process

- 3.5 Public notice of the review was given on 6 September 2016 and full details of the review were placed on the Council's website. The period for representations to be made on the existing and draft proposals was from 23 September 2016 until 14 October 2016.
- 3.6 Prior to the commencement of the review, members of the Communities Policy Development Group were briefed about the process and the changes that need to be made. Its members also suggested venues that might be suitable for the revised arrangements. As part of the review, initial consultation was undertaken of the existing polling districts and polling places with District Councillors. Draft proposals were then prepared and further consultation on these draft proposals was undertaken. The consultation then invited comments from all District and County Councillors, all Parish/Town councils, local political parties and the Acting Returning Officer for the constituencies partly within the South Kesteven area.
- 3.7 A number of responses to the consultation have been received and these have been summarised and incorporated into **Appendix 1**. These are listed against the relevant polling district.
- 3.8 Where changes have been necessary as a result of the revised division boundaries or where comments have been received as part of consultation process, various options have been considered in each case. These are detailed below:

Ward/Parish	Proposed changes
Bourne East Ward (change in polling place for	Changes to the county division boundaries have divided the Bourne East ward across two electoral divisions. The polling

approximately 220 electors)	district boundaries need to be revised to reflect this change. As a result, it is proposed that the polling station for affected electors in Baldwin Grove and Harrington Street will change from Bourne Youth Centre to Meadow Close Communal Room.
Deeping St James Ward (change in polling place for approximately 200 electors)	It is proposed that the boundary between the two polling districts in Deeping St James be revised to reduce the number of electors who vote at the Deeping Community Centre. This proposed change will result in approximately 200 electors voting at the Deeping St James Primary School at future elections.
Glen Ward Toft with Lound & Manthorpe (no change in polling place proposed)	Currently residents from Toft with Lound and Manthorpe vote at Witham-on-the-Hill Parish Hall. Following the review of County Council divisions, Witham-on-the-Hill and Toft with Lound and Manthorpe will be in separate electoral divisions. It is proposed that the polling station for both parishes remain at Witham-on-the-Hill Parish Hall, with two polling stations at this location for County Council elections to accommodate the separate divisions.
Grantham Springfield Ward (no change in polling place proposed)	Walton Girls' High School had requested that the Council consider an alternative polling place to the school. Alternatives considered : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grantham Squash Club – outside polling district• Bethesda Evangelical Church – not available• The Farrier Public House – not on a through-route for electors in the Ward It is proposed that the polling station remain at Walton Girls' School.
Grantham St Vincent's Ward (change of polling station for approximately 950 electors)	Part of the Grantham St Vincent's ward currently vote at the Council's Witham Room. Following the review of County Council boundaries an additional polling station is required due to the area now covering three separate electoral divisions. It is proposed that the voters in Grantham St Vincent's ward, who currently vote at the Witham Room, be relocated to a new polling station at the Jubilee Life Church, which is located within the polling district.
Market Deeping Ward Market Deeping parish (Change of polling station for approximately 390 electors)	Changes to the County Council division boundaries have placed part of the Market Deeping parish in a separate electoral division and created a new parish ward (Swine's Meadow parish ward with effect from 2019). As a result, it is proposed that a new polling station be created at Market Deeping Scout and Guide Hall to accommodate this separate division/parish ward. The Scout and Guide Hall is ideally located for voters in this area.
Morton Ward Morton and Hanthorpe (no change in polling place proposed)	Following the review of County Council divisions, the Morton and Hanthorpe parish will be divided across two electoral divisions. Currently residents from both Morton and Hanthorpe vote at Morton Village Hall. No alternative venues have been identified in Hanthorpe and it is proposed

	that the polling station, for both Morton and Hanthorpe, remain at Morton Village Hall. Two polling stations will be required at this venue for County Council elections to accommodate the separate divisions.
Peascliffe and Ridgeway Honington Parish (Change of polling station for approximately 100 electors)	Currently residents of the parish of Honington vote at Carlton Scroop Village Hall. Following the review of County Council divisions, Honington and Carlton Scroop and Normanton will be in separate divisions. Retaining Honington at Carlton Scroop Village Hall would require a second polling station at the Village Hall at County Council elections for approximately 100 electors. It is proposed that the polling station for electors in the Honington parish be relocated to Barkston and Syston Village Hall for all elections. Barkston and Syston Village Hall is within the same district ward and electoral division.
Stamford St Mary's Ward (Change of polling station for approximately 560 electors)	Changes to the County division boundaries have led to a consequent creation of an additional parish Ward within the St. Mary's District Ward area (St Peter's parish ward with effect from 2019). Polling arrangements within the Ward need revising to reflect the changes. As a result of these changes it is proposed that an additional polling station be created at the Stamford Arts Centre to accommodate the separate electoral divisions/parish wards. This would involve relocation of approximately 560 electors from Clare Close Communal Room to the Stamford Arts Centre.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None arising from this report.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION

6.1 None arising from this report.

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 A stage one equality analysis has been completed which has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken. Accessibility of polling stations is a key requirement of the review and the allocation of polling places.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this report.

9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

9.1 The proposals, if implemented, will result in financial implications in relation to additional venue hire and staffing costs on election day. The proposals identify the need for three additional polling stations at District Council elections. Any additional costs would only fall to the District council at the time of any District Council election or by-election. The next District elections will be held in 2019.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

10.1 The Council has a legal duty under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to conduct interim reviews of polling districts and polling places as required between compulsory reviews.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

None

12. APPENDICES:

- **Appendix 1 – Schedule of revised proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places, consultation feedback and list of streets**