



FULL COUNCIL

Monday, 4 November 2024

Subject: Statutory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Stations and Polling Places

Report by:

Returning Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To consider the outcome of the recent review of polling districts and polling places

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the process undertaken, and responses received, summarised in Appendix 1 be noted.**
- 2. That the proposals for the polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the District, as set out in the analysis of polling stations document attached at Appendix 2 of the report be approved. (Key changes are set out in paragraph 5.4.).**
- 3. That Council receives the outcome and recommendations arising from the next statutory review not later than November 2029**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

In order to comply with the requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the Council must seek to provide reasonable facilities for voting that, so far as is practical, are accessible to all electors including those who are disabled.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 mandates that compulsory Reviews must be held once every five years, with the last statutory review reported to Council in November 2019.

The outcome of this review becomes effective from scheduled elections in May 2025, any by-elections in the intervening period are not affected by these proposed changes.

The next Statutory review will therefore need to be presented to Council in November 2029.

Financial : FIN/90/25/VA

The designation of any additional polling places will have financial implications regarding the hire of premises and polling staff fees and will be contained within existing budgets. Some elections are grant funded.

Staffing :

None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the accessibility needs of disabled persons to be taken into account when designating polling places.

Equality Impact assessment for stations closing has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix 3

Data Protection Implications :

None arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

None arising from this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :

None arising from this report.

Health Implications:

None arising from this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Consultation responses received – held by Elections.

Risk Assessment :

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

x

No

Executive Summary

This report sets of the statutory requirement to review Polling Stations, Places, and Districts, the process undertaken and the arising recommendations, contained in Appendix 2 and summarised at Section 5.4 of this report .

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Electoral Registration & Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The first compulsory review under this requirement had to be completed by 31 January 2020, with Council receiving the outcome report in November 2019.
- 1.2 Subsequent compulsory reviews must be held once every five years, as such this report sets out the outcome of the second compulsory review and steps undertaken in reaching this outcome.
- 1.3 In undertaking a review, the local authority must:
 - a) Publish notice of the holding of a review;
 - b) Consult the (Acting) Returning Officer for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area;
 - c) Enable any such (Acting) Returning Officer to make representations to the authority and publish them in a prescribed manner;
 - d) Seek representations from such persons that it thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability;
 - e) Allow any elector in the authority's area to make representations which could include proposals for alternative polling places.
- 1.4 On completion of a review the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as is prescribed in the Act and regulations.
- 1.5 Details of the Returning Officer's proposals regarding polling districts, polling places, electorates and postal voters are set out at Appendix 2.

2. POLLING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND POLLING PLACES

- 2.1 Polling Districts are, in effect, sub divisions of Electoral Wards. Each parish 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.
- 2.2 When designating polling districts, the local authority must seek to ensure that all the electors in the area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances.
- 2.3 In determining where polling places should be located the Council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances and that, so far as is reasonable and practical, polling places chosen are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.

3. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN

- 3.1 Public notice of the review was given on 1 October 2023 and full details of the review were placed on the Council's website. The period for representations to be made on the Returning Officer's proposals was from 1 October 2023 to 5 January 2024.
- 3.2 In addition, the following specific consultations were undertaken explaining the reason for the review and factors which could influence the Returning Officer's proposals regarding the location of polling districts/places:
- a) with all Members of the Council prior to the publication of the Returning Officer's proposals by way of electronic mail on 28 September 2023
 - b) with all Town/Parish Councils and Chairs of Parish Meetings by way of a letter dated 28 September 2023.
 - c) letters advising of the review, accessibility and proposals dated 1 28 September 2023 to:
 - i. Gainsborough Constituency Conservative Association
 - ii. Gainsborough Constituency Labour Party
 - iii. West Lindsey Liberal Democrats
 - iv. United Kingdom Independence Party
 - v. Lincolnshire Independents
- 3.3 Press releases were issued to the local media and notices placed on parish notice boards throughout the Council's administrative area.

4. COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 A total of 9 responses were received and these are summarised in the schedule set out at Appendix 1. The schedule provides details of the parishes on which comment has been received, observations of the Returning Officer and the name of the person or organisation who has made comments or representations.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council is aware that in a vast, mainly rural area such as West Lindsey, there are many electors who have to travel some miles in order to vote at their allocated polling station. However, postal voting is available to all electors and is an easier and more convenient method of voting for many electors. The current records show that almost 13,010 electors have already chosen to vote by post on a permanent basis, an increase of over 1,860 since the last review was undertaken in 2019.
- 5.2 Throughout the review process every effort has been made to ensure that 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.

- 5.3 The proposals as listed in Appendix 2 reflect the composition of the 20 district council wards, and each polling station contains a recommendation arising from the review. Where a change is recommended this is shown in highlighted or red text.
- 5.4 The main changes proposed are summarised below and all agreed changes would become effective from the next large scale planned elections in May 2025. Any by-elections held in the intervening period, would be subject to the current designated polling places.

Ward	Polling District & Register No.	Polling Place	Recommended Change
Caistor & Yarborough	Keelby 1 BF Keelby 2 BG	Keelby Village Hall	Reduce to single polling station
Gainsborough North	Gains. No.7 FB Gains. No.8 FC Gains. No.9 FD	Gladstone House Club 370 Ropery Road Gainsborough (previously Mercers Wood Academy)	Previous polling place was Mercers Wood Academy. This was changed under delegation 2 years ago due direction to not use schools where possible post COVID. This to be a permanent change.
Hemswell Ward	Blyborough HA Grayingham HD	The Conservatory 1 Hillside Blyborough	Station no longer available. Proposed to move electors to village hall, Willoughton 0.8 miles away
Hemswell Ward	Hemswell Cliff HH	Hemswell Cliff Primary School Capper Avenue Hemswell Cliff (previously Hemswell Court)	Station previously cited at Hemswell Court, moved under delegated powers due to cost, to Hemswell Cliff Primary School. This to be a permanent change
Market Rasen	Legsby KA Sixhills KJ	Legsby County Primary School Main Road Legsby	Stop using this location as the school has to close to accommodate - move electors to Tealby (Memorial Hall). Station has been moved under delegation previously in 2019 & 2023 without issues – this to be a permanent change
Saxilby	North Carlton MF South Carlton MI	St Luke's Church Church Lane North Carlton	Stop Using this location due to poor facilities . Electorate to join Burton Estate Club 2.6 miles (4 mins)
Scampton	NG Scampton	Barnes Wallace Community Centre (formerly known as the Youth Hub)	Between Reviews the Polling Station was relocated to Pollyplatt School under delegation whist the RAF site,

		Gibson Drive Scampton	on which the designated polling station was situated, was transferred to Waddingham. The station was re-instated to the Scampton Youth Hub now known as Barnes Wallace Centre under delegation in May 2024 Station to return to Scampton Barnes Wallace Centre on permanent basis
Waddingham & Spital	Normanby-by-spital SD Owmby SE Saxby SF West firsby SI	County primary school Main road Normanby-by-spital	Stop using this location as the school has to close to accommodate . Move electorate to Glentham village hall - . Station has been moved under delegation previously in 2021 and 2023 without any issues. This to be a permanent change.

* Grey boxes denote changes made between reviews under delegation which are to become permanent

5.5 On occasions designated polling places may become unavailable for use during elections owing to the closure of buildings or premises being used for other events. The Returning Officer requires approval by the Council in order to change polling places at relatively short notice. For this reason, the Constitution grants delegated authority to the Returning Officer following consultation with local Ward Member(s) to approve any such changes during an election period.

5.6 As is indicated in the Analysis of polling stations document set out at Appendix 2, there is a station, where no changes are recommended through this review, but where changes will likely need to be made before the next statutory review. Namely, St Peter's Church, Main Street, Torksey.