

Subject: Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

Report to: Policy and Resources

Date: 23 July 2019

Report by: Licensing and Elections Manager

SUBJECT MATTER AND DECISIONS REQUIRED:

Members are advised of the compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations and asked to note the consultation period required.

Final approval will be required from Members once all representations and recommendations have been received.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 all local authorities are required to complete a review of their parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least every five years.
- 1.2 The last review in Great Yarmouth took place in 2014 although polling places are kept under review annually following an election.
- 1.3 The next compulsory review is required to be completed by 31 January 2020.
- 1.4 Polling arrangements for both parliamentary and local elections are the subject of legislation, principally the Representation of People Act 1983 (as amended)
- 1.5 Polling arrangements are determined by three inter-related features:
 - **Polling District** - is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area. For voting purposes, each Parliamentary constituency and every local government ward is divided into smaller polling districts. Great Yarmouth has 17 wards and 46 districts.
 - **Polling Place** – is the building or area in which polling stations are selected. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors
 - **Polling Station** – is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place.
- 1.6 When undertaking a review, the law says that an authority must
 - a) Seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - b) Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors,

including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons.

2. FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS

2.1 When carrying out the review, local authorities must:

- Publish a notice of the holding of a review
- Consult the (Acting) Returning Officer for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area
- Publish all representations made by an (Acting) Returning Officer
- Seek representations from such persons as it thinks have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. And publish any correspondence received. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- On completion of the review the council is required to give reasons for its decisions in the review and to publish the result

2.2 The timetable for this review is as follows:

| Task | Deadline |
|---|--|
| Publish Notice | 25 July 2019 |
| Publish existing electoral arrangements | 25 July 2019 |
| Consult with all interested parties | 26 July 2019 |
| Collate and publish any comments received | As received up to end of consultation period |
| End of consultation period | 13 September 2019 |
| Review of consultation and final recommendations | 27 September 2019 |
| Report to P&R committee for final decision | 7 November 2019 |
| Publish final decision | 11 November 2019 |
| Any alterations ready for publication of Register of Electors | 1 December 2019 |

3. DECISION REQUIRED

3.1 For members to note the requirement of a compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling places, together with the consultation process required. All councillors will be consulted as part of the review and all comments are encouraged.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Statutory Changes

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None

EXECUTIVE BOARD OR DIRECTOR CONSULTATION:

Returning Officer, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Director have been notified.

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|---|---------------------|-----|
| Does this report raise any legal, financial, sustainability, equality, crime and disorder or human rights issues and, if so, have they been considered? | Issues | |
| | Legal | Yes |
| | Financial | |
| | Sustainability | |
| | Equality | |
| | Crime and Disorder | |
| | Human Rights | |
| | Risk Considerations | |