

SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	CAROLYN WHEATER, CITY SOLICITOR

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report the outcome of the consultation carried out in respect of the Polling District and Polling Place Review and recommend to Council a schedule to Polling Districts and Polling Places for approval.

2. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

- 2.1 The Council is required to undertake a review of its Parliamentary polling districts and polling places between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.

- 2.2 When undertaking a review the authority must:

- seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every Polling Place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled;
- have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons of potential Polling Stations in any place which it is considering designating as a Polling Place or the designation of which as a Polling Place it is reviewing;
- ensure that the Polling Place for a Polling District must be in an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district;
- consider that the Polling Place for a Polling District must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the Polling Station.

- 2.3 The review formally commenced on 10 December 2018 and interested parties were able to submit comments as part of a public consultation up to 25 January 2019. The following individuals and organisations were consulted:

- electors via the City Council's website and social media;
- political parties;
- all City Council elected members;
- the Member of Parliament for Lincoln;
- representatives of people with disabilities via the Lincolnshire Disability Access Group.

- 2.4 A schedule of current Polling Districts and Polling Places was made available to all parties who were consulted, together with a map which outlined the location of Polling Districts and Polling Places, together with those Polling Stations used at the last local elections held in May 2018. The schedule also provided details of any proposed changes to Polling Districts and Polling Places. The (Acting) Returning Officer, as part of the consultation, confirmed that she did not intend to make any changes to those Polling Stations used.
- 2.5 **Appendix A** attached to this report outlines the responses received to the consultation in respect of certain Polling Districts and Polling Places, together with comments in respect of those responses.
- 2.6 Councillors Bob Bushell, Geoff Ellis and Adrianna McNulty, the three local members for Moorland Ward, submitted a response to suggest a change in the GF Polling District, seeking to address the southern part of the Polling District. They felt this part of the Polling District was too far away from the current Polling Station at Holy Cross Church on Skellingthorpe Road. Three options were put forward to rectify this issue, as follows:
- i) split the GF Polling District in half and create a new Polling District (GFA), with the new GFA Polling District continuing to use Holy Cross Church located to the north of the Polling District and the remaining GF Polling District being allocated to Moorland Community Centre on Moorland Avenue located to the east of the Polling District;
 - ii) extend the boundary of the GB Polling District to take half of the GF Polling Station, meaning that those electors in the southern half of the GF Polling District would be allocated to Moorland Community Centre.
 - iii) make use of one of the retail units on Turner Avenue as a new Polling Place for the GF Polling District.
- 2.7 Sustrans have recently taken over a vacant retail unit on Turner Avenue. The Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager has visited the premises and this unit would meet the necessary requirements for use as a Polling Station. Sustrans are currently in the process of refurbishing the unit, which was a former butcher's, and although they have estimated that this work will be complete by May 2019, it would not be prudent to allocate this as a Polling Station for this year's local elections should any delays occur to their schedule.
- 2.8 The three local members are content with maintaining existing arrangements for this year's elections and are supportive of allocating the Sustrans building on Turner Avenue as an additional Polling Place for the GF Polling District from 2020. Officers are also supportive of this proposal, as is the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- 2.9 The list of Polling Districts and Polling Places proposed by officers for the period 2019 – 2024, taking into account the comments received as part of the consultation, is attached at **Appendix B** to the report.

3. Strategic Priorities

3.1 Let's reduce inequality

The review of Polling Districts and Polling Places seeks to ensure that Polling Stations in the City of Lincoln are reasonably accessible to all electors.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Each Polling Place proposed as part of this report has been considered in line with Electoral Commission guidance on a range of issues in respect accessibility and disabled access. All proposed Polling Places and associated Polling Stations meet the relevant criteria and regulations enabling them to be used for further elections. It has not been necessary to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That the proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places for future elections, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, be approved.

5.2 That the Chief Executive be authorised to make alternative arrangements should any of the proposed Polling Places become unavailable for any future election.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

Two

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

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