

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	EXECUTIVE	Item 13	Page 1 of 4
Report Originator	Sue Lyons Head of Democratic and Legal Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
Wards Affected	All	10 th September 2014	
Title	POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To notify members of the Executive in respect of the above review, and provide details of the Research & Development Committee recommendations in respect of it.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement that Returning Officers review the polling districts and polling places within their Council area every five years. The previous requirement was for this process to be undertaken every four years, but as a result of the introduction of fixed five year terms for Parliaments, there was a need to ensure consistency in time periods for this purpose. The last review for Kettering Borough took place in 2011, and the findings were implemented at the Borough Council elections in May of that year. They have been in place since then, subject to a small number of amendments when premises have become unavailable or unsuitable for use as polling stations or in response to local requests to move polling stations. A list of the premises used as polling stations for the elections held in May 2011 is attached at Appendix A to this report and includes details of changes made between that date and the European Parliamentary Elections held in May 2014.
- 2.2 As part of the consultation process for the review, members will be asked for their comments on the existing situation with regard to polling districts, polling places and polling stations. It is envisaged that reports will be submitted to the following meetings of various Committees and Forums to facilitate that as follows:

Committee	Date
Research & Development Committee	2 nd September 2014
Executive	10 th September 2014
Kettering Town Forum	24 th November 2014
A6 Towns Forum	26 th November 2014
Rural Forum	27 th November 2014
Research & Development Committee	2 nd December 2014
Executive	10 th December 2014
Council	17 th December 2014

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2.3 A report was submitted to the meeting of the Research & Development Committee on 2nd September 2014, and details will be provided verbally of the recommendations of that Committee at the meeting.

2.4 The timetable for the review is as follows:

- Mid-September 2014 – Publish notice of the holding of the review
- Mid October 2014 – Publish the report of the (Acting) Returning Officer within 30 days of the notice and seek representations on its content
- End of November 2014 – Deadline for receipt of representations
- Mid-December 2014 – Final report to full Council and publication of the decision of the Borough Council
- February 2015 – Any amendments needed to the structure of Register of Electors to be implemented

2.5 Definitions

In order to assist members the definitions of each of the terms used in respect of the matters being reviewed are as follows:-

- **Polling District**

The area created by the division of an electoral ward into smaller parts, within which we can designate a polling place that is convenient to electors.

- **Polling Place**

The building where polling takes place. A polling place may have more than one station within it.

- **Polling Station**

The area within a room where the poll takes place. Each polling station is allocated a number of voters.

2.6 Roles and responsibilities

- **The local authority**

The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant district council in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area.

- **The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)**

Where a local authority makes any alterations to the polling districts within its area, the ERO must amend the register of electors accordingly – either on a notice of alteration or by publishing a revised register. The

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changes to the register take effect on the date that the ERO publishes a separate notice stating that the alterations have been made, which should be done to coincide with the publication of a notice of alteration/publication of a revised register.

- **The (Acting) Returning Officer**

The (Acting) Returning Officer must comment during any review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places on both existing polling stations and the polling stations that would likely be used if any new proposal for polling places were accepted.

The election rules require the (Acting) Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and they must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as they think most convenient.

- **The Electoral Commission**

While legislation provides no role for the Commission in the review process, it does provide for a role after the conclusion of the review in terms of an appeal process against any decisions the Council have made. The Commission may direct the authority to make any alterations to the polling places that it thinks necessary and, if the alterations are not made within two months, the Commission may make the alterations ourselves.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 The following people may make representations or comment in respect of this or any other matter relating to the review:

- Any elector in the Kettering Constituency or within Kettering Borough
- Any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability

Persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, identify alternative places that can be used for polling. Comments and representations may be made up until the end of November 2014.

3.2 Public notice of the review has been given and a copy of the notice relating to the review and the accompanying documentation is on the Council's website. Letters asking for comments and representations have also been sent to:-

- Parish and Town Councils in the Borough
- Registered Political Parties active in the Borough

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- Local Groups representing people with disabilities
- Any individual elector who expresses an interest

4. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement that Returning Officers review the polling districts and polling places within their Council area every five years.

5. **USE OF RESOURCES**

The cost of this review can be met from the allocated electoral services budget for 2014-15.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

Members' comments are sought in respect of:-

- i) The recommendations of the Research and Development Committee;
- ii) The review timetable and process; and
- iii) The process for them considering the existing structure of polling stations within the Borough/Constituency.

Background Papers:

Title of Document: Electoral Commission Guidance
Date: February 2013
Contact Officer: Ian White (ext 4200)

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref: None
Date: N/A