

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Polling Arrangements Review Sub-Committee

Date of Meeting: 7th October 2014
Report of: Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Subject/Title: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 1 May 2014 the Constitution Committee authorised the publication of the notice of the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review, and authorised the conduct of this review by the Polling Arrangements Review Sub-Committee. Full Council subsequently agreed to delegate the final decision for the outcome of the review to the Constitution Committee on 27 November 2014 (prior to 1 December 2014, which is the statutory publication date for annual register of electors).
- 1.2 Local authorities have always been required to divide their area into Polling Districts for the purposes of elections, to designate Polling Places for these Polling Districts, and to keep these under review. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a statutory duty for local authorities to carry out a review of their parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places by 31 December 2007; and at least every four years thereafter. In accordance with this legislation the Council conducted its last Review in 2011 and a Polling Arrangements Review Sub-Committee (with delegated powers to undertake the review) was appointed for this purpose.
- 1.3 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places. The next compulsory review must now be completed by 31 January 2015. Subsequent compulsory reviews must then be completed every five years thereafter.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 To recommend a proposal to the Constitution Committee for Polling District and Polling Places arrangements, taking into account representations received.

3.0 Wards Affected

- 3.1 All wards are affected.

4.0 Local Ward Members

- 4.1 As above.

5.0 Policy Implications

5.1 None.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 Costs incurred will be met from existing budgets.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 None.

8.0 Risk Management

8.1 Undertaking this Review is a statutory duty which must be completed by the deadline of 31 January 2015.

9.0 Background

9.1 A **Polling District** is the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts within which a Polling Place can be determined which is convenient to electors.

9.2 A **Polling Place** is the building or area in which Polling Stations will be selected by the Returning Officer.

9.3 The **Polling Station** is the room or building where the poll takes place which is chosen by the Returning Officer for the election.

9.4 The Review has four stages:-

Stage 1 – Notification of the review

The first stage of the process involves giving notice of the Review. Notice was published at the end of June 2014 and interested parties, including elected members and disability groups, were notified of the review.

Stage 2 – Consultation

The consultation stage is for representations and comments to be made on the existing and proposed arrangements for Polling Districts and Places. There are two parts to this:

- A compulsory submission from the (Acting) Returning Officer of the Parliamentary Constituencies; and
- Submissions from electors and other interested persons and bodies.

Stage 3 – Concluding the Review

Following the consultation stage, the Authority must make its final decisions on the most appropriate polling districts and polling places. The Electoral Registration Officer must then make any necessary alterations to

the electoral register and publish a notice stating that the alterations have been made.

Stage 4 – Publishing the conclusions of the Review

Once the Council has agreed the proposals, details of the new polling districts and polling places must be made available to the public. These should be made available at the local authority offices, in at least one conspicuous place in the constituencies and on the Council's website together with the reasons for choosing each particular polling district and polling place.

- 9.5 A schedule of proposed recommendations for changes to Polling Places is attached to this report (**Appendix A**), together with a copy of the (Acting) Returning Officer's submission (**Appendix B**). Proposals have been drafted to incorporate a summary of representations received.

10.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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