



## Council – 15 December 2014

### Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

#### Purpose of report

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires the council to undertake a review of polling districts and places in the period of 16 months from 1 October 2013. The review in East Northamptonshire took place during the autumn of 2014 and this report details the final polling district and polling place proposals.

#### Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Proposed Scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983, councils are required to divide their area into polling districts, to designate polling places for those polling districts and to keep their electoral arrangements under review.
- 1.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed every four years. The council's first review was carried out in 2007 and a subsequent review was undertaken in the autumn of 2011.
- 1.3 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended this duty to require the statutory review to take place between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015.
- 1.4 Each polling district must offer reasonable facilities for voting for all electors, as far as it is practicable in the circumstances. The current polling district and polling places arrangements were agreed by the council in October 2011 and have been kept under review and amended, where necessary, through authority delegated to the Chief Executive, Executive Director and Head of Resources and Organisational Development. This proactive approach to the management of polling district and polling places enables the council to respond to changes expediently and without recourse to the formal review process.

#### 2.0 Process

- 2.1 In conducting this review, the council is required to ensure that:
  - all electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
  - polling places are accessible to all electors and all sections of the community; and
  - it takes into account the accessibility needs of disabled persons
- 2.2 The Electoral Commission provides the following definitions of polling districts, polling places and polling stations:
  - Polling District – the area created by the division of a constituency or ward. Within this area, a polling place must be determined, which is convenient to electors registered in that area.
  - Polling Place – the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer
  - Polling Station – the room or building where the poll takes place. This is chosen by the Returning Officer for the election and is published on various official notices and communicated to the electorate, often via poll card.

2.3 In conducting the review, the council followed a number of principles to guide the development of the proposed scheme of polling districts and polling places. These principles have been developed from feedback received from electors, polling station staff, councillors and town and parish councils. The principles followed are:

- Continue to use as many existing polling stations as practicable for voter continuity
- Ensure polling stations are accessible for all voters with regard to facilities and location; where possible, they should be located on or near to public transport routes
- Ensure disabled access facilities are fit for purpose and accessible to users
- Ensure that facilities for polling station staff are of a good standard i.e. toilet, cooking facilities, running water, heating and lighting
- To reduce cost where possible – any cost reduction identified will not be to the detriment of the voting experience
- Incorporate feedback received
- Have regard to the guidance published by the Electoral Commission.

2.4 There were a number of responses received during the review period, predominantly from ward Members regarding the location or suitability of existing polling places.

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Issue</b>  | <b>Response</b>  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| TC and TM               | The John White Golf Club is too far outside of Rushden and acts as a deterrent to electors who do not have access to a vehicle. | It is proposed that the polling place for these polling districts be changed to Rushden and Higham Rugby Club on Bedford Road, which is west of the A6 and is within walking distance for most electors. No viable alternatives within the polling district were identified during the review.   |
| SQ                      | Electors in Newton Bromswold currently have to vote at The John White Golf Club, which requires a car journey of several miles. | It is proposed to reinstate the Polling Place at Newton Bromswold Memorial Hall for the combined elections on 7 May 2015 to encourage increased participation. This arrangement will be reviewed again in the summer of 2015 as voter numbers at this polling station have been extremely low in the past.   |
| TQ                      | Poor parking and accessibility at the Catholic Parish Hall on Hayway, Rushden.  | It is proposed that the polling place for this polling district be changed to Rushden Town Bowling Club, which has ample parking and meets all criteria for designation as a polling place. Consideration was given to using the Fire Station on Washbrook Road or a location within Asda Supermarket; however, neither of these was considered appropriate due to issues in respect of parking and potential disturbances to the conduct of the poll. |
| SB                      | Parents at Henry Chichele Primary School have complained about the closure of the school on polling day.                        | Whilst the closure of the school is a matter for the head teacher and governing body, efforts have been made to find a suitable alternative polling place in the polling district. No viable alternatives have been identified at this stage, but the suggestion of alternatives is welcome and will be investigated.  |

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| SF | Representations were received regarding poor lighting surrounding the polling place at The Albert Underwood Room and the potential for intimidation of electors. | Whilst having regard to the representation made, there no viable alternative polling places in Irthlingborough Waterloo ward presently. Where intimidation of electors is alleged, these should be reported to the Returning Officer and to Northamptonshire Police to investigate. |
|----|--|---|

- 2.5 Representations were received indicating that the Christian Fellowship Church on Allen Road and the Cricket Club off Windmill Road in Irthlingborough John Pyel ward may have been suitable locations for polling places. A visit was made to both sites, however it was not possible to gain inside access to the church or the cricket club. Investigations will continue to be made to establish the suitability of these locations.
- 2.6 One representation raised the issue of access to polling stations by residents with disabilities. It remains necessary to use household properties as polling stations in Little Addington and Slipton due to the lack of suitable alternative locations in those polling districts. It is not possible to require these polling places to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act; however, every effort will be made to ensure that these polling places are as accessible as possible.
- 2.7 Representations have also been received concerning the use of schools as polling places. The number of schools designated as polling places in East Northamptonshire has reduced from since the last review in 2011, with Denfield School and Southfield Road School no longer being used. In addition, the Returning Officer has also used an annex at the Whitefriars Church on Boughton Drive in Rushden, rather than the school. Overall the number of schools used is now four across the district and was previously seven at the last review. It should be noted that the Returning Officer does not require a school to close on polling day, but only needs use of a room within a school as a polling station. The decision to close is a matter for the head teacher and/or governing body of the school. Electoral Services will continue to work to identify suitable alternative locations for future elections
- 2.8 The Electoral Registration Officer will continue to monitor elector increases on a yearly basis to inform the ongoing review of polling districts and polling places outside of the statutory review period. Electoral Services will continue to liaise with the Head of Planning Services to identify significant developments within the district which will impact on the size of the electorate in individual polling districts.
- 2.9 The allocation of polling places remains the subject of ongoing review beyond the statutory requirements of a polling district review. Indeed, the proposals before Council represent a snapshot of the current position; circumstances can change rapidly and it is recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, Executive Director and the Head of Resources and Organisational Development, in consultation with Ward Members, to agree any further changes to polling districts or polling places until the time of the next statutory review in 2019.

### **3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 3.1 The proposals before Members have been assessed having regard to equality and diversity requirements, as per the statutory requirement. The council had regard to its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 in commencing and conducting the review (minute 88 refers). It is recommended that Members have regard to the issues of accessibility highlighted in appendix A in considering the recommended scheme.

### **4.0 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The main body of this report details the statutory requirements of a review of Polling Districts and Polling Places. As this report has been presented in advance of 31 January 2015, the requirement to complete the review by that date has been met.

## 5.0 Risk Management

5.1 There are no significant risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

## 6.0 Resource and Financial Implications

6.1 There are no resource or financial implications directly arising from the proposals.

## 7.0 Constitutional Implications

7.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

## 8.0 Corporate Outcomes

8.1 These proposals impact on two corporate outcomes:

- Good quality of life – safe: the prospect of improving access to polling stations for disabled people
- High Quality Service Delivery (satisfied residents and enhanced customer experience): supporting the customer by ensuring that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting *as are practicable in the circumstances*

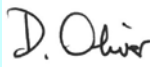
9.1 The council is recommended to resolve:

- (1) That, having had regard to the accessibility status of polling places, the proposed scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places, as appended to this report, be approved.

*(Reason – to comply with statutory requirements)*

- (2) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, Executive Director and Head of Resources and Organisational Development, in consultation with ward councillors, to review polling districts and polling places as required until the next statutory review in 2019.

*(Reason – to ensure that polling districts and polling places can be reviewed when required outside of the statutory review timetable.)*

|                                   |  |                        |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| <b>Legal</b>                      | Power: Electoral Administration Act 2006,<br>Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2014                            |                        |   |
|                                   | Other considerations: Electoral Commission – Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations (2013)       |                        |   |
| <b>Background Papers:</b>         | Report to Council – Polling District and Polling Place Review (14 July 2014)   |                        |   |
| <b>Person Originating Report:</b> | James McLaughlin, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager<br>☎ 01832 74(2113) ✉ jmclaughlin@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk |                        |   |
| <b>Date: 24 November 2014</b>     |  |                        |   |
| <b>CFO</b>                        | <b>DMO</b><br>5.12.2014  | <b>CX</b><br>5.12.2014 |  |

## Scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places for UK Parliamentary Election on 7 May 2015

### BARNWELL WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place  | Disabled Access            | Proposal  |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| RB               | Aldwincle Village Hall, 58 Main Street, Aldwincle            | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| RF               | Barnwell Village Hall, Hemington Road, Barnwell              | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| RM               | Mandate House, Old Weston Road, Clopton                      | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| RZ & SN          | Hemington Village Hall, Main Street, Hemington               | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| UK               | Thurning Village Hall, Clopton Road, Thurning                | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE |
| SK & UF          | St. John the Baptist CoE Church, Church Lane, Thorpe Achurch | Yes                        | NO CHANGE |
| UL               | Titchmarsh Village Hall, 19 High Street, Titchmarsh          | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### FINESHADE WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place   | Disabled Access            | Proposal  |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------|
| RN               | Collyweston Village Hall, 16 High Street, Collyweston             | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| RS & RU          | Duddington Village Hall, Church Lane, Duddington                  | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE |
| RT               | Easton-on-the-Hill Village Hall, New Road, Easton-on-the-Hill     | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| RY               | Harringworth Village Hall, Gretton Road, Harringworth             | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE |
| UO               | Office at The Manor House, The Manor House, Main Street, Wakerley | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### HIGHAM FERRERS CHICHELE WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place  | Disabled Access | Proposal  |
|------------------|--|-----------------|-----------|
| SA               | The Community Hall (Duchy Suite), Higham Ferrers Junior School, Saffron Road, Higham Ferrers | Accessible      | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for this polling place

### **HIGHAM FERRERS LANCASTER WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>   | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| RL                      | Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston            | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SB                      | Henry Chichele Primary School, School Lane, Higham Ferrers     | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SC                      | Hensman Hall, Chichele Street, Higham Ferrers                  | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SQ                      | Newton Bromswold Memorial Hall, Rushden Road, Newton Bromswold | Accessible             | <b>NEW</b>      |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

It is proposed to reintroduce a polling station in **Newton Bromswold Memorial Hall** due to the proposal to move an existing polling station at John White Golf Club further into Rushden. Taking into account the need to maximise participation in the elections scheduled for 7 May 2015, it is considered appropriate to re-establish this polling station for this election only.

### **IRTHLINGBOROUGH JOHN PYEL WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                   | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| SD                      | College Street Centre, College Street, Irthlingborough | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for this polling place.

### **IRTHLINGBOROUGH WATERLOO WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>  | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| SF                      | The Albert Underwood Room, St Peters Church, Church Street, Irthlingborough | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SG                      | Crow Hill Community Centre, 2 Fettleline Road, Irthlingborough              | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for this polling place.

## **KINGS FOREST WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                      | <b>Disabled Access</b>     | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| RD                      | The Kings Head Public House, Kings Cliffe Road, Apethorpe | Accessible                 | <b>NEW</b>      |
| RH & RK                 | Bulwick Village Centre, Main Street, Bulwick              | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE       |
| RP & RQ                 | Deene Village Hall, Deene                                 | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SI                      | Kings Cliffe Village Hall, Eagle Lane, Kings Cliffe       | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SJ                      | Laxton Village Hall, Main Street, Laxton                  | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |

### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

Having received a notification from the landowner of the current polling place that it is now on the market for sale, an alternative location has been identified at The Kings Head Public House. A suitable location for a polling station within the public house has been identified which would be sufficiently far away from the bar area so as to address any concerns that voters may have regarding the activities of the premises undermining the integrity of the electoral process.

## **LOWER NENE WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                     | <b>Disabled Access</b>     | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| RE                      | The Chequered Skipper, Ashton                            | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| RO                      | Cotterstock Village Hall, Main Street, Cotterstock       | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SO                      | Lutton Village Hall, Washingley Lane, Lutton             | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SU                      | Polebrook Village Hall, Hemington Road, Polebrook        | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE       |
| UE                      | Tansor Village Hall, Main Street, Tansor                 | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| UP                      | Warmington Village Hall, 27-29 Church Street, Warmington | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |

### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **LYVEDEN WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                               | <b>Disabled Access</b>     | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
| RJ                      | Brigstock Village Hall, 8 Bridge Street, Brigstock | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SL                      | Germain Rooms, Drayton Road, Lowick                | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| SM                      | Room at Bakehouse Cottage, High Street, Slipton    | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE       |
| UD                      | Sudborough Village Hall, Main Street, Sudborough   | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| UM                      | MacQueen House, High Street, Twywell               | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **OUNDLE WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                  | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| RG                      | Benefield Village Hall, Main Street, Lower Benefield  | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SR                      | Methodist Church Hall, Drummingwell Lane, Oundle      | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SS                      | The Joan Strong Centre, Herne Park, East Road, Oundle | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| ST, UC & UN             | Wadenhoe Recreation Hall, Church Street, Wadenhoe     | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **PREBENDAL WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                 | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| SP                      | Nassington Village Hall, Church Street, Nassington   | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| RV                      | Fotheringhay Village Hall, Main Street, Fotheringhay | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| RW                      | Glaphorn Village Hall, Main Street, Glaphorn         | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| UA                      | Southwick Village Hall, Main Street, Southwick       | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| UR                      | Woodnewton Village Hall, Orchard Lane, Woodnewton    | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| US                      | Yarwell Village Hall, Main Street, Yarwell           | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places



### RAUNDS SAXON WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place                    | Disabled Access | Proposal  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| SV               | Saxon Hall, Brook Street, Raunds | Accessible      | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for this polling place

### RAUNDS WINDMILL WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place                                 | Disabled Access | Proposal  |
|------------------|---|-----------------|-----------|
| SW               | Raunds Windmill School, Windmill Lane, Raunds | Accessible      | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for this polling place

### RUSHDEN BATES WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place  | Disabled Access | Proposal   |
|------------------|--|-----------------|------------|
| TA & TB          | Heritage Chapel and Halls, Park Road, Rushden        | Accessible      | NO CHANGE  |
| TC               | Rushden and Higham Rugby Club, Bedford Road, Rushden | Accessible      | <b>NEW</b> |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

To agree the designation of **Rushden and Higham Rugby Club** as the polling station for polling district TC instead of The John White Golf Club. The venue has been assessed for suitability, accessibility, convenience and meets the required standards. No suitable alternative locations were identified during the review.

### RUSHDEN HAYDEN WARD

| Polling District | Polling Place   | Disabled Access | Proposal  |
|------------------|---|-----------------|-----------|
| TD               | St Peter's Church Hall, Midland Road, Rushden                 | Yes             | NO CHANGE |
| TD1 & TE         | Independent Wesleyan Church Hall, Queen Street, Rushden       | Yes             | NO CHANGE |
| TF               | Rushden and Higham United Football Club, Hayden Road, Rushden | Yes             | NO CHANGE |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **RUSHDEN PEMBERTON WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                     | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| TH                      | Tennyson Road Infant School, Highfield Road, Rushden     | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| TJ & TK                 | Whitefriars Church (The Bridge), Boughton Drive, Rushden | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **RUSHDEN SARTORIS WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                 | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| TL                      | Full Gospel Church, 60 High Street South, Rushden    | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| TM                      | Rushden and Higham Rugby Club, Bedford Road, Rushden | Accessible             | <b>NEW</b>      |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

To agree the designation of **Rushden and Higham Rugby Club** as the polling station for polling district TM instead of The John White Golf Club. The venue has been assessed for suitability, accessibility, convenience and meets the required standards. No suitable alternative locations were identified during the review.

### **RUSHDEN SPENCER WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                 | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| TO & TP                 | Tennyson Road Infant School, Highfield Road, Rushden | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| TQ                      | Rushden Town Bowling Club, Northampton Road, Rushden | Accessible             | <b>NEW</b>      |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

To agree the designation of **Rushden Town Bowling Club** as the polling station for polling district TQ instead of the Catholic Parish Hall on Hayway. The venue has been assessed for suitability, accessibility, convenience and meets the required standards. Consideration was also given to the Fire Station on Washbrook Road and the Asda Supermarket, however these were not considered appropriate due to the potential for disturbances from the activities in both premises.

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### **STANWICK WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                            | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| RX                      | Hargrave Village Hall, Church Street, Hargrave  | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| UB                      | Stanwick Village Hall, Spencer Parade, Stanwick | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places.

### **THRAPSTON LAKES WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                       | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| SH                      | Islip Village Hall, 2 Old Farm Lane, Islip | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| UG                      | The Plaza Centre, Cosy Nook, Thrapston     | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **THRAPSTON MARKET WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>                                | <b>Disabled Access</b> | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| RR                      | Denford Village Hall, Front Street, Denford         | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| SZ                      | Ringstead Village Hall, High Street, Ringstead      | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |
| UJ                      | East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston | Accessible             | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

### **WOODFORD WARD**

| <b>Polling District</b> | <b>Polling Place</b>  | <b>Disabled Access</b>     | <b>Proposal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| RA                      | Great Addington Memorial Hall, Woodford Road, Great Addington | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |
| RB                      | Room at Chancel Cottage, High Street, Little Addington        | Accessible with assistance | NO CHANGE       |
| UQ                      | Woodford Baptist Chapel, Rose Terrace, Woodford               | Accessible                 | NO CHANGE       |

#### **Returning Officer's Proposal:**

No changes are proposed for these polling places

