

## **CABINET – 14 JANUARY 2020**

### **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS**

#### **Report of Chief Executive**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations carried out as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

#### **2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 To note the submissions made to the Council in respect of the review of polling districts and polling places for Sunderland City Council.

- 2.2 To note the final proposals in respect of the review.

- 2.3 To recommend to Council to agree:

- The implementation of changes to the parliamentary polling districts and parliamentary polling places as detailed in Appendix 3 to apply to all elections, namely UK Parliamentary, Local Government and any other elections and referenda
- The authorisation of the Electoral Registration Officer to make the amendments to polling districts for the Electoral Register to be published on 1 February 2020
- The delegation to the Chief Executive to make, where necessary, alterations to the designation of any polling place prior to the next full review in consultation with ward Councillors and the portfolio holder
- That due to the parish areas of Burdon (in Doxford ward) and Warden Law (in Copt Hill ward) being extremely small, with few electors, special circumstances apply for the purposes of the Representation of the People Act 1983, so that those parishes do not need to be separate polling districts

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed by the end of 2007, and then at least once every four years thereafter. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. This change required that the next compulsory review should be started and completed between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015. Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.

- 3.2 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council may divide the city wards into polling districts and designate at least one polling place for each district. It also should keep these arrangements under review. The boundaries of local government wards are not covered by this review as they are determined by the Boundary Commission for England.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this review, a polling district is a geographical area created by the sub division of a UK Parliamentary Constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary Election. A polling place is the building or area in which polling station will be positioned by the Acting Returning Officer. A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting will take place.
- 3.4 Polling districts and polling places for other elections are not automatically part of this compulsory review. However, as polling districts and polling places for other elections are based on UK Parliamentary polling arrangements, the requirements of any other elections held within the local authority should be taken into consideration as part of this review and it is proposed the recommendations in respect of parliamentary elections are applied to all other elections and referenda.
- 3.5 The Council has carried out informal reviews of polling districts and polling places regularly since the ward boundaries were last reviewed and changed in 2004.
- 3.6 As part of the informal reviews, consultation was held with Council members, candidates, election agents and local Members of Parliament. Arising from that, amendments have been made to some polling districts and polling stations to improve access and comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 3.7 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced several changes to the RPA 1983 in respect of the way reviews must be undertaken. The most important change is that the Council must conduct a full review by 31 January 2020 and every five years thereafter. This does not, however, prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review.
- 3.8 Council agreed the current polling districts within the City in November 2014.
- 3.9 It should be noted that the Electoral Commission (EC) has no role in the review process itself. However, the EC can consider comments if people do not think the review has met the reasonable requirements of electors or taken sufficient account of the needs of disabled electors. The following can appeal to the commission:
- 30 or more registered electors
  - any person who made comments during the review
  - any non elector who has expertise in access to premises or facilities for disabled people

As a result, the Electoral Commission can direct the Council to alter arrangements arising from the review and make these alterations itself if the Council does not do so within two months.

#### 4. Current Position

4.1 A review of polling districts, places and stations, in line with Electoral Commission guidance, was carried out between 2 September and 11 October. As part of the review the Council published the Acting Returning Officer's comments in respect of each of the existing polling districts, places and stations. These were published on the Council's website, in the Customer Service Centre and sent to all Members, the three Members of Parliament and various equality forums.

4.2 12 comments were received, all of which are contained in Appendix 2.

4.3 All comments were considered and the Acting Returning Officer has suggested the following:

Electoral Area	Polling District / Station	Polling place /station name	Proposed changes
Barnes Ward Sunderland Central Constituency	A5 / A05	West Community Association, Chester Road	No proposed changes – keep under review
Copt Hill Ward Houghton and Sunderland South Constituency	C4 / C04	Cherry Tree Gardens, Orchard Place, Houghton le Spring	No proposed changes – keep under review
Redhill Ward Washington and Sunderland West Constituency	L4 / L04	Willow Fields Community Primary School, Winslow Close, Witherwack	No proposed changes – keep under review
St Anne's Ward Washington and Sunderland West Constituency	N2 / N02	St Thomas Church, Petersfield Road	Propose to move polling district boundary which will move properties in Birchberry Close that are currently in N02 into N04

St Anne's Ward Washington and Sunderland West Constituency	N4 / N04	Broadway Junior School, Springwell Road	Propose to move polling district boundary which will move properties from Birchberry Close that are currently in N02 into N04
St. Peters Ward Sunderland Central Constituency	Q1 / Q01	Residents Lounge, Zetland Square, Multi Storey Block	No change to polling district. Propose to change polling station to <b>Dame Dorothy Community Hub, Dock Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland</b>
Silksworth Ward Houghton and Sunderland South Constituency	T3 / T03	Beckwith Mews Activity Room, Beckwith Mews	Propose to move polling district boundary and move properties on Mary Street from T03 to T04
Silksworth Ward Houghton and Sunderland South Constituency	T4 / T04	New Silksworth Methodist Church, North Street	Propose to move polling district boundary and move properties on Mary Street from T03 to T04

A full list of polling districts, places and stations can be found at Appendix 3 which includes the above.

4.4 This report recommends that these changes are proposed to full Council to be implemented.

## 5. Reasons for the Decision

5.1 To comply with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 which requires all local authorities to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2020.

## 6. Alternative Options

6.1 The Council does not comply with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. This is not recommended as the Council would be in breach of the Act.

## 7. Impact Analysis

7.1 An equality analysis has been carried out and the recommendations in this report are not considered to have any adverse impact on equalities.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations**

There are no other considerations.

## **9. Glossary**

N/A

## **10. List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – a list of polling stations currently used detailing the allocation of polling districts and polling places.

Appendix 2 – summary of the representations received and the comments from the Acting Returning Officer

Appendix 3 – proposed changes to polling districts and polling places.

## **11. Background Papers**

Consultee's comments on the Acting Returning Officers recommendations

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/22/contents>

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/6/pdfs/ukpga\\_20130006\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/6/pdfs/ukpga_20130006_en.pdf)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2/contents/enacted>

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/2965/contents/made>

