

**Wiltshire Council**

**Full Council**

**16 October 2018**

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### **Polling District and Polling Place Review**

#### **Summary**

The Council is required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 to undertake a compulsory review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places which must be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).

This report sets out a proposal to amend the terms of reference for the Electoral Review Committee to consider the issues raised in such a review and to make recommendations to full Council.

#### **Proposal**

##### **It is recommended that:**

- a) the Council notes the current position regarding the requirement to conduct the Polling District and Polling Place Review within the statutory timescales.
- b) the Electoral Review Committee, comprising 10 members, progresses the Polling District and Polling Place Review on behalf of the Council and formulates recommendations to the Council for approval.
- c) the terms of reference for the Electoral Review Committee are amended as set out in the Appendix to this report.
- d) the Council approves, as a one-off funding, use of the Enabling Fund Earmarked Reserve for the provision of any additional resources required for this programme of work.

#### **Reason for Proposal**

The Electoral Review Committee will have an understanding of polling district and polling places as part of the current Electoral Review and how changes to those boundaries may impact on polling districts.

**Dr Carlton Brand**  
**Corporate Director**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To set out reasoning for the Electoral Review Committee to take on additional responsibility for overseeing the polling district and polling place review, and update the Committee's Terms of Reference accordingly.

#### **Background**

2. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended the Representation of the People Act 1983 to require the Council to undertake regular reviews of both polling districts and polling places within its area.
  - A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, (an electoral area being a UK Parliamentary constituency, a European Parliamentary electoral region, a parish, parish ward or an electoral division).
  - A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.
  - A polling station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district. The Returning Officer for the particular election must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, and allocate the electors to those polling stations in such manner as he or she thinks the most convenient.
3. The purpose of such a review is ensure that all electors have reasonably practicable facilities for voting and that polling places are reasonably accessible to electors who are disabled. The review will need to be completed by 31 January 2020.
4. The Act requires the Council to publish notice of a Polling District and Polling Place review and to consult both the (Acting) Returning Officer for Parliamentary elections and persons whom the Council considers have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have disabilities. In addition, anyone may comment on the review.
5. The Council has already set up an Electoral Review Committee to make representations to the Local Government Boundary Commission on the future size of the Council and the electoral divisions within it. It therefore seems appropriate for this Committee to be additionally responsible for overseeing the polling district and polling place review and that the terms of reference of the Committee be amended accordingly.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

6. There are no specific safeguarding implications associated with this report

### **Public Health Implications**

7. There are no specific public health implications associated with this report.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

8. There are no specific environmental and climate change considerations associated with this report

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

9. The prescribed procedures for conducting a review of polling districts and polling places requires the Council to specifically seek representations from people in relation to the accessibility of premises for those with disabilities.

### **Risk Assessment**

10. If the Council does not properly resource its role in the review, there is a significant risk for the Council will not be able to discharge its responsibilities in relation to the conduct of the review.

### **Financial Implications**

11. Considering the amount of work that will be required and the associated timeline, this programme will need to be adequately resourced. Budgetary provision will be made available from the 'Enabling Fund' Earmarked Reserves to resource this programme of work.

### **Legal Implications**

12. The Polling District and Polling Place Review is a statutory process as detailed in the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. The review has to be completed by 31 January 2020.

### **Dr Carlton Brand Corporate Director**

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### **Background Papers**

Electoral Commission Guidance on Polling District and Polling Places Review (link below)

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

### **Appendix – Electoral Review Committee – Terms of Reference**



## Appendix

### Electoral Review Committee

#### Terms of Reference

##### 1) Composition

- a) The Committee shall consist of 10 members appointed in accordance with the rules on political proportionality.
- b) The Committee shall appoint a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership .

##### 2) Responsibilities

- a) To oversee the provision of information required by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in carrying out its Electoral Review of Wiltshire, including any consultation arrangements with electors or other stakeholders;
- b) To update full Council on the progress of the Electoral Review;
- c) To make recommendations to full Council on proposed submissions to the LGBCE relating to
  - i) The total number of councillors on Wiltshire Council;
  - ii) The number and boundaries of electoral divisions within Wiltshire Council;
  - iii) The number of councillors to be returned by any electoral division;
  - iv) The name of any electoral division;
- d) To determine on a case by case basis whether any requests for community governance reviews should be progressed during the Electoral Review and if so
  - i) to make recommendations to Council accordingly
  - ii) to oversee any community governance reviews that are to proceed and to make recommendations to Council on the outcomes of such reviews.
- e) To provide such further advice and support as may be requested by the Council related to or impacted upon by the Electoral Review.
- f) To oversee the provision of information required in carrying out the Polling District and Polling Place Review, including any consultation arrangements with electors or other stakeholders;
- g) To make recommendations to Council on the proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places.