



REPORT TO:	South Holland District Council
DATE:	Wednesday, 24 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023
PURPOSE:	To consider the recommendations following the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places within the South Holland District area.
KEY DECISION:	<i>N</i>
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Jim Astill
REPORT OF:	Christine Marshall, (Acting) Returning Officer and Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development
REPORT AUTHOR:	Rhonda Booth
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
EXEMPT REPORT?	<i>N</i>

SUMMARY

Under Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 there is a requirement for local authorities to undertake a review of their Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every five years. The last review of the South Holland area was completed in January 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To adopt the polling districts and polling places as listed in Appendix 1 to this report which include the following changes:
 - a. To relocate the following streets in Pinchbeck from Polling District PS2 to PS1 – Rotten Row, Primrose Crescent, The Chase, Fennell Road, Wayet Road, Brayfields and odd numbers of Rose Lane to accommodate growing electorate numbers.
 - b. To relocate the Polling Place for Polling District CRD1 from Crowland Parish Rooms to Snowden Pavilion, off Thorney Road, Crowland.

- c. To relocate the Polling Place for Polling District CRD2 from Snowden Pavilion to Crowland Community Hall, Broadway, Crowland.
 - d. To relocate the Polling Place for Polling Districts CRD4 and CRD5 from Deeping St Nicholas Primary School to Deeping St Nicholas Church.
 - e. To relocate the Polling Place for Polling District PS2 from Pinchbeck Village Hall to Pinchbeck Church Hall on Rose Lane.
 - f. To confirm Monkshouse Scout Hut as the Polling Place for Polling District SMK4.
 - g. To confirm Bromley Hall as the Polling Place for Polling District SMK5.
 - h. To merge Polling Districts SC1 and SC2.
 - i. To merge Polling Districts SSJ3 and SSJ4.
2. That the (Acting) Returning Officer be granted delegated authority for keeping polling districts and polling places under review and amending any such arrangements (following consultation with local Ward Member(s)) where there is an operational need, prior to the next compulsory District wide review.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To comply with the legislative requirements of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 in implementing the findings of the statutory review and consultation process.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to carry out a review at this time

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District area into polling districts and designate a polling place for each of those polling districts and to keep the arrangements under review.
- 1.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 also requires the Council to undertake compulsory reviews every five years. The Council is required to complete this next compulsory review between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.
- 1.3 Polling districts are, in effect, sub-divisions of electoral wards. Each parish or parish ward is automatically a polling district in its own right, but then that area can be broken down into

further polling districts dependant on the size of the parish and the number and location of the electors. Responsibility for determining polling district boundaries lies with the Council.

- 1.4 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is the body responsible for determining the ward boundaries and these can only be changed following a review by the Commission.
- 1.5 The Council must designate a polling place for every polling district. In determining where polling places should be located the Council must seek to ensure that all the electors have such reasonable facilities for voting that are practical in the circumstances and that, so far as is reasonable and practical, polling places are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.
- 1.6 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires a review of polling districts and polling places to be undertaken every five years. The last review for the area was completed in January 2020. It is considered timely to complete the review in advance of the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024. In addition, the General election can be held at any time before 28 January 2025, and it is considered appropriate for the polling places review to be completed as early as possible to ensure certainty of polling places for this election if it is called at short notice.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 The South Holland review commenced on 3 October 2023 with the publication of the Notice of Review of Polling District and Polling Places 2023. Notices were placed on the Council's website and at the Council offices along with press releases inviting electors to submit comments.
- 2.2 As part of the review process the (Acting) Returning Officer was required to make representations to the local authority on the existing polling places and the polling places that would likely be used on the proposed arrangements. These were published on 17th October 2023 and a consultation on these proposals ran until 29th November 2023.
- 2.3 In carrying out this review, the Council has sought to ensure that:
 - All the electors in the area have reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - So far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to electors who have a disability and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of those with a disability.
 - The polling place is within the area of the polling district unless circumstances make it necessary to designate somewhere else.
- 2.4 Interested parties consulted as part of this review were:
 - Local (Acting) Returning Officers
 - Members of Parliament

- Lincolnshire County Councillors covering the South Holland area
- South Holland District Councillors
- Parish Councils via Parish Clerks
- Political Parties (who have stood at recent elections)
- Disability Access Groups
- Local electors via social media and Council website

2.5 During the consultation three submissions were received and these are summarised below with the (Acting) Returning Officers comments and also noted in Appendix 1.

<p>Crowland and Deeping District Ward</p> <p>Parish – West Ward</p> <p>Cllr Jim Astill – District Councillor Crowland and Deeping</p> <p>Nigel Pepper – LCC Councillor</p>	<p><u>Cllr Astill:</u> Whilst there is no issue with the Pavilion, it would be good if we could move this back to within the west part of the parish. The old British Legion Hall is now available again as a “hall for hire”.</p> <p>Whilst it does not have parking it is a larger space and does have more modern facilities for the polling staff (kitchen and toilets).</p> <p>It is generally a better building all round.</p> <p><u>LCC Councillor Nigel Pepper:</u> The polling station for CRD2 Crowland West Ward is situated in the East Ward, I’m sure you will be aware that this came about because of the closure of the previously used polling station being the Royal British Legion Hall, Broadway, Crowland, this led to a little confusion locally at the SHDC election in May of this year.</p> <p>I consider every attempt should be made to find a suitable building in the West Ward of Crowland, however I fully understand that this could be impossible once again</p>
<p>(Acting) Returning Officers comments</p>	<p>A new premises has been identified – Crowland Community Hall which is in the West Ward and will be used going forward.</p> <p>This will allow the Snowden Pavilion, which is in the East Ward, to be used solely for the East of the Parish.</p>

<p>Crowland and Deeping Ward</p> <p>Tongue End Parish Ward</p> <p>Councillor Astill</p>	<p>It is not acceptable for the electorate to have to travel a significant distance to vote.</p> <p>From where Google puts the centre of Tongue End its 7.8 miles via narrow roads that are not particularly accessible and 10 miles via the A15/A1175 (15.6 and 20 miles return journeys).</p> <p>On this basis I feel we need to do more to provide a polling station more locally.</p> <p>This could be achieved through a mobile polling station or by using a closer location.</p> <p>I appreciate there is a lack of suitable facilities therefore alternatives could be:</p>
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	<p>1) Using a new location out of district in Baston (4.5 miles one way)</p> <p>2) Using an existing polling station from another ward (Bromley Hall in PODE Hall which is 4.6 miles one way).</p>
(Acting) Returning Officers comments	<p>Current polling station electorate is 144.</p> <p>Currently no suitable site can be found for either a polling station or mobile station.</p> <p>Electoral Commission Guidance does not recommend going outside of district.</p> <p>Recommendation is to continue to use Deeping St Nicholas Church for all elections except County due to the different Divisions.</p> <p>For County elections Bromley Hall to continue to be used for CRD5.</p> <p>The situation will continue to be monitored.</p>

Spalding St John's Local resident	<p>My feedback for the current review of polling stations would be to have an alternative to the schools that are used – in particular St Norberts.</p> <p>Schools shutting for a day placed additional burdens on parents and means children miss out on vital education.</p> <p>We are told on a regular basis about the detrimental impact on absences from school and yet schools are being used for polling stations and closing for the day.</p>
(Acting) Returning Officers comments	<p>We always try to minimise the use of schools where possible.</p> <p>A discussion took place with the Head of the school who confirmed they were content to close the school to safeguard the children. Recommendation to continue to use.</p>

- 2.6 Growing electorate numbers in Pinchbeck has meant some changes to Polling Districts and moving some of the properties from PS2 to PS1 to more evenly spread the electorate allocated to the polling places/stations. Pinchbeck Village Hall has been used for some considerable time as the one main village centre polling place and as the electorate continues to grow and in the opinion of the (Acting) Returning Officer another polling place is required. The Church Hall on Rose Lane is recommended as the additional polling place.
- 2.7 The merging of SC1 and SC2 together and SSJ3 and SSJ4 together is an administrative task only.
- 2.8 At the recent District Council elections, electors in Polling District SMK4 used Monkshouse Scout Hut as their Polling Place and electors in Polling District SMK5 used Bromley Hall Memorial Hall as their Polling Place. The (Acting) Returning Officer is recommending this change continues.

3 CONCLUSION

3.1 The Council is recommended to approve the proposals in Appendix 1

4 EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1 *None*

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS' PARTNERSHIP

5.1.1 *None*

5.2 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.2.1 *None*

5.3 STAFFING

5.3.1 The Electoral Services team will need to update the Electoral Register and republish to take into account the changes in Polling Districts.

5.4 WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

5.4.1 *None*

5.5 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.5.1 The statutory review was carried out as per the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

5.6 DATA PROTECTION

5.6.1 *None*

5.7 FINANCIAL

5.7.1 *None*

5.8 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.8.1 *None*

5.9 STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

5.9.1 Responses were invited from the (Acting) Returning Officer and other interested parties as per 2.4

5.10 REPUTATION

5.10.1 *None*

5.11 CONTRACTS

5.11.1 *None*

5.12 CRIME AND DISORDER

5.12.1 *None*

5.13 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

5.13.1 None

5.14 HEALTH AND WELL BEING

5.14.1 None

5.15 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.15.1 None

5.16 ACRONYMS

5.16.1 None

APPENDICES	
<i>APPENDIX 1</i>	<i>(Acting) Returning Officer Proposals of polling districts and polling places for South Holland</i>

BACKGROUND PAPERS	
Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -	
Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations	Electoral Commission.org.uk

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT
A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body

REPORT APPROVAL	
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