

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Council**

**27 January 2015**

### **Polling District and Polling Places Review 2014**

## **Report of Returning Officer**

This report is public

### **Purpose of report**

To agree the recommendations from the Council's Polling District and Polling Place Review 2014.

## **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider the recommendations for Polling Districts and Polling Places within Cherwell as set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To agree the proposals in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 To note that a further polling place review will be undertaken following the conclusion of the Boundary Commission review.
- 1.4 To delegate authority to the Returning Officer and Chief Executive to conduct and implement a review of polling places once the District Boundary Review has been completed in 2015.

## **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act 1983, including a requirement for the Council to review UK Parliamentary polling Districts at least every four years.
- 2.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2006 introduced a change to the timing of these compulsory reviews so that the next compulsory review must 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.

2.3 The Act provides that the requirement to review polling districts and polling places relates solely to Parliamentary elections. Constituency boundaries are not the subject of the review, which is confined to the division of Parliamentary constituencies into polling districts and polling places. It is important for the council to take the opportunity to ensure that boundaries remain appropriate in the light of development which has taken place, and any development which is known will take place in the reasonably near future. The following definitions are given in the act:

- 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 stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place.

2.4 Amongst the factors that should be considered when reviewing existing polling places or assessing new polling places, the following are suggested:

Location – Is it reasonably accessible within the polling district? Does it avoid barriers for the voter such as steep hills, major roads, rivers etc? Are there any convenient transport links?

Size – Can it accommodate more than one polling station if required? If multiple polling stations are required, is the polling place capable of accommodating all voters going into and out of the polling stations, even where there is a high turnout?

Availability – Is the building readily available in the event of any unscheduled elections? Is there a possibility that the building may be demolished as part of a neighbouring development?

2.5 Accessibility – Is the building acceptable to all those entitled to attend?

### **3.0 Report Details**

3.1 The review was undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance, however due to the Cherwell District Boundary Review currently being undertaken it is necessary to leave the majority of polling places the same and review all polling places when the District Boundary review has concluded.

### **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

4.1 It is a legal requirement to undertake the polling district and polling place review. The recommendations are based on what will provide the best service and experience to the voters going forward.

4.2 To accept the polling places report as set out and delegate powers to the Returning Officer to conduct and implement a review of polling places once the District Boundary Review has been completed in 2015.

## 5.0 Consultation

None

## 6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To agree the recommendations as set out

Option 2: To reject the recommendations. This is not recommended as there is a legal requirement to complete a polling Place Review by 31 January 2015.

## 7.0 Implications

### Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications currently to be met, although once the review is carried out after the District Boundary Review has concluded there may be a need for additional polling places and these can be met through the budget.

Comments checked by:

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### Legal Implications

7.2 It is a legal requirement to undertake the review of polling districts and polling places every five years.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law & Governance 0300 0030107  
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### Risk Implications

7.3 Reputational risk if the review is not undertaken.

Comments checked by:

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### Equalities Implications

7.4 Every eligible voter must have the same opportunity to vote in secret, there should be no discrimination due to disability, age, race, gender etc.

Comments checked by:

Louise Tustian, Acting Corporate Performance Manager 01295 221786  
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## 8.0 Decision Information

### Wards Affected

All

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

None

### Lead Councillor

None

## Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Proposed Changes to Polling Stations
Background Papers	
None	
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