



Report To: Civic Affairs Committee

December 2016

Lead Officer: Alex Colyer, Returning Officer and Interim Chief Executive

Interim Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2016

Purpose

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has recently completed electoral reviews of both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. These completed reviews have resulted in a need for the Council to review some of its polling districts and polling places. This opportunity is also being used to review polling arrangements in Trumpington Meadows.
2. This is not a key decision. However, the recommended changes are largely essential to ensure the Returning Officer can continue to run effective elections across the district.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Civic Affairs Committee recommends to Council adoption of the following changes to the Council's scheme of Polling Districts and Polling Places:
 - (a) Deletion of the existing polling district of Fen Ditton (RA1), and creation of two new polling districts of Fen Ditton West (RA1) and Fen Ditton East (RA2). Residents in RA1 will continue to vote in Fen Ditton. Residents in RA2 will need to attend the polling station in Teversham to vote in the county elections next year. They will vote in Fen Ditton for other elections.
 - (b) Deletion of the existing polling district of Whittlesford South (WH2), with all WH2 properties being moved into the polling district of Whittlesford (WH1).
 - (c) Amendment of the appointed polling place for the polling district of Childerley (NL2) to incorporate the parish of Knapwell. This will allow electors in Childerley to visit the Knapwell station for the county elections next year.
 - (d) Creation of a new polling district of Trumpington Meadows (PG2), with all the properties within the boundary of the new polling district being moved from Haslingfield (PG1).
4. The register will be republished in February 2017 to reflect these changes. All changes are reflected in the revised scheme at **Appendix 4**.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. The recommendations made above are essential to the continued delivery of efficient and effective elections in South Cambridgeshire.

Background

6. Polling districts are the “building blocks” of electoral areas (such as parishes, wards and divisions). It is the Councils job to keep these building blocks under review, primarily to ensure convenient and effective local democracy for its residents. South Cambridgeshire is wholly split into polling districts, and the Council must also define a polling place for each of its districts, within which the Returning Officer will site their polling station.
7. Electoral Commission guidance indicates that in England each parish should form its own polling district (unless there are special circumstances). South Cambridgeshire adheres to this rule – there are no polling districts which cover more than one parish. There are a handful of parishes which are made up of more than one polling district, and these are usually where parishes are warded, or made up of two distinct areas.
8. The Council was required to undertake a full review of polling districts and places in 2013.
9. We are therefore now undertaking an interim review only, which is focussed on looking at issues arising in specific parts of the district, predominantly where current arrangements have been compromised by the LGBCE reviews.

1. Fen Ditton

10. As a result of the County Council electoral review, Fen Ditton is set to become a warded parish. This means that Fen Ditton residents will elect parish councillors to two separate parish wards. Each of those parish wards has been placed into a different county division.
11. This change means that Fen Ditton **must** be split into two separate polling districts. This is essential to ensure that county elections can be run using the new boundaries.
12. The proposed polling district boundaries can be seen at **Appendix 2**.

2. Whittlesford

13. An anomaly has existed in Whittlesford parish for the past few years, since a Community Governance Review (CGR) changed the parish boundary between Duxford and Whittlesford. Council elected at the time of the CGR not to ask the LGBCE to review the district council boundary between the two parishes. This meant that the area which changed parishes from Duxford to Whittlesford Parish remained in the Duxford ward.
14. Since then an administrative polling district called Whittlesford South (WH2) has been in place to ensure elections in the area can be run effectively.
15. The completed county and district electoral reviews have resolved this anomaly, which means that the Whittlesford South (WH2) polling district can now be deleted. All electors in the whole of the parish of Whittlesford will now be able to vote in the usual Whittlesford polling station.

3. Childerley

16. Historically, residents in Childerley have voted in the Caldecote polling station. The county review has seen Childerley moved into a different county council division to Caldecote, which means that electors from Childerley will no longer be able to vote in Caldecote for county elections.

17. The consultation document suggested that electors in Caldecote could visit the Boxworth polling station. However, it has been pointed out that Boxworth is not easily accessible by vehicle from Childerley. It is therefore proposed that Childerley residents visit the Knapwell polling station for county elections, as this is considered the most local and accessible station.
18. To facilitate this change, the polling place for Childerley will be updated to include the parish of Knapwell. The polling place will continue to include Caldecote, as Childerley residents will still need to go there for other elections. The Returning Officer will write to all registered electors in Childerley to raise awareness of this change.

4. Haslingfield / Trumpington Meadows

19. The development at Trumpington Meadows is a significant distance from the parish centre of Haslingfield (the parish in which it currently sits). Trumpington Meadows residents currently visit the Haslingfield polling station to vote.
20. A CGR is ongoing to consider the future governance arrangements for the area. Irrespective of the outcome of that review, the number of occupied properties in the SCDC part of the development, along with continued planned development, warrant a dedicated polling station. Members should be clear that this polling district review is wholly separate from the CGR, and that a new polling district is appropriate whatever the outcome of that review.
21. The proposed polling district aligns with the outline for a Trumpington Meadows parish as agreed by the Civic Affairs Committee for the second stage of the CGR consultation. At this stage the proposed polling district excludes any potential changes that might be made to Grantchester parish. A future polling district review will be undertaken in that respect if it becomes necessary.
22. A map of the proposed polling district can be viewed at **Appendix 3**.

Considerations

23. This polling district review is slightly unusual, in that many of the changes recommended for adoption must be made to allow elections to be run on new boundaries.
24. The Council is required to consult extensively when reviewing polling districts and polling places. To that end, the full consultation document was hosted on the Council's consultation portal for over a month, and was advertised over social media channels. Details of the review were sent directly to all parish clerks, district councillors and to the Acting Returning Officer of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
25. **Appendix 1** contains responses to the consultation. There were few responses and none were negative about the proposed changes.
26. It should be noted that polling stations are determined by the Returning Officer and not by Council. As such, they are not a formal part of this review. However, the Returning Officer has stressed through this review (and outside it) that the selection of polling station venues is kept under constant review.

Options

27. Recommendations 3(a) and (c) are essential to allow elections to be run using new boundaries. Adoption of these proposals should be recommended to Council.
28. Recommendations 3(b) and (d), while not technically essential, should be recommended to Council to provide for more efficient and effective local government. Should the Committee decide not to recommend to Council adoption of these changes, local residents will find the voting process less accessible.

Implications

29. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

30. There are no significant financial implications.

Legal

31. There are no significant legal implications.

Staffing

32. There are no staffing implications.

Risk Management

33. Failure to adopt some of these new polling district boundaries will make it impossible for the Returning Officer to run effective elections.

Equality and Diversity

34. There are no equality and diversity implications, and no representations have been received regarding accessibility of any of our polling arrangements.

Climate Change

35. There are no climate change implications.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

36. Consultation responses are at **Appendix 1**.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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