

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Item A4	Page 1 of 4
Report Originator	Ian White (Electoral Services Manager)	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
Wards Affected	All	16 th April 2019	
Title	POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To notify members of the Committee in respect of the above review, and establish a process for how they would wish to consider the existing structure of polling stations within the Borough/Constituency.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement that Returning Officers review the polling districts and polling places within their Council area every five years. The last review for Kettering Borough took place in 2014, and the findings were implemented at the Borough Council elections held in May 2015. They have been in place since then, subject to a small number of amendments when premises have become unavailable or unsuitable for use as polling stations or in response to local requests to move polling stations. The last election at which the current list of polling stations was used was the UK Parliamentary General Election held in June 2017 and that list is attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 As detailed above the review of polling districts and places is a statutory requirement that must be undertaken and completed by January 2020 irrespective of any proposals for local government reform currently under consideration.
- 2.3 As part of the consultation process for the review, members will be asked for their comments on the existing situation with regard to polling districts, polling places and polling stations. It is envisaged that reports will be submitted to the following meetings of various Committees and Forums to facilitate that as follows:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>
Research & Development Committee	16 th April 2019
Executive	22 nd May 2019
Kettering Town Forum	8 th July 2019
A6 Towns Forum	10 th July 2019
Rural Forum	18 th July 2019
Research & Development Committee	3 rd September 2019
Executive	18 th September 2019
Council	25 th September 2019

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Item A4	Page 2 of 4
------------------	------------------------------------	------------	----------------

2.4 In order for this Committee to consider the existing structure of polling stations within the Borough/Constituency, members are requested to consider how they would wish to undertake this. Their comments will be passed to the meeting of the Council's Executive Committee to be held on 22nd May 2019.

2.5 The timetable for the review is as follows:

- Mid-April 2019 – Publish notice of the holding of the review
- End of May 2019 – Publish the report of the (Acting) Returning Officer within 30 days of the notice of review and seek representations on its content
- End of July 2019 – Deadline for receipt of representations
- Late-September – Final report to full Council and publication of the decision of the Borough Council
- 1st December 2019 – Any amendments needed to the structure of Register of Electors to be implemented

2.6 Definitions

In order to assist members the definitions of each of the terms used in respect of the matters being reviewed are as follows:-

- **Polling District**

The area created by the division of an electoral ward into smaller parts, within which we can designate a polling place that is convenient to electors.

- **Polling Place**

The building where polling takes place. A polling place may have more than one station within it.

- **Polling Station**

The area within a room where the poll takes place. Each polling station is allocated a number of voters.

2.7 Roles and responsibilities

- **The local authority**

The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant district council in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Item A4	Page 3 of 4
------------------	------------------------------------	------------	----------------

- **The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)**

Where a local authority makes any alterations to the polling districts within its area, the ERO must amend the register of electors accordingly – either on a notice of alteration or by publishing a revised register. The changes to the register take effect on the date that the ERO publishes a separate notice stating that the alterations have been made, which should be done to coincide with the publication of a notice of alteration/publication of a revised register.

- **The (Acting) Returning Officer**

The (Acting) Returning Officer must comment during any review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places on both existing polling stations and the polling stations that would likely be used if any new proposal for polling places were accepted.

The election rules require the (Acting) Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and they must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as they think most convenient.

- **The Electoral Commission**

While legislation provides no role for the Commission in the review process, it does provide for a role after the conclusion of the review in terms of an appeal process against any decisions the Council have made. The Commission may direct the authority to make any alterations to the polling places that it thinks necessary and, if the alterations are not made within two months, the Commission may make the alterations themselves.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 The following people may make representations or comment in respect of this or any other matter relating to the review:

- Any elector in the Kettering Constituency or within Kettering Borough
- Any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability

Persons or bodies making representations should, if possible, identify alternative places that can be used for polling. Comments and representations may be made up until the end of July 2019.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Item A4	Page 4 of 4
------------------	------------------------------------	------------	----------------

3.2 Public notice of the review has been given and a copy of the notice relating to the review and the accompanying documentation is on the Council's website. Letters asking for comments and representations have also been sent to:-

- Parish and Town Councils in the Borough
- Registered Political Parties active in the Borough
- Local Groups representing people with disabilities
- Any individual elector who expresses an interest

4. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement that Returning Officers review the polling districts and polling places within their Council area every five years.

5. **USE OF RESOURCES**

The cost of this review can be met from the allocated electoral services budget for 2019-20.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

Members' comments are sought in respect of:-

- i) the review timetable and process; and
- ii) the process for them considering the existing structure of polling stations within the Borough/Constituency.

Background Papers:

Title of Document: Electoral Commission Guidance
Date: August 2018
Contact Officer: Ian White (ext 4200)

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref: None
Date: N/A