

## **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2019 25 September 2019**

### **Report of Chief Executive**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To enable Council to consider arrangements for determining the outcome of the review of polling districts and polling places in the Parliamentary Constituencies of Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Fleetwood.

**This report is public.**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That consideration be given to amendments to polling districts and polling places in the Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Fleetwood Parliamentary Constituencies as outlined in Appendix B to this report.**
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Returning Officer in consultation with the relevant ward Councillors, to make any necessary changes to polling places that may arise other than as part of a review.**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Section 17 of the Electoral registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to carry out and complete a review of polling district and polling places between 01 October 2013 and 31 January 2015 and then in the period of 16 months beginning with 01 October of every fifth year after that.
- 1.2 For clarification, a **“polling district”** is defined as the geographical area created by sub-dividing a constituency/ward; a **“polling place”** is defined as a designated area for a polling district in which polling stations are located and a **“polling station”** is defined as the room in which polling takes place.
- 1.3 The Council must
  - a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the Constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practical in the circumstances;
  - b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practical the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those that are disabled and when considering designation of a polling place must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

#### **2.0 Details of Consultation**

- 2.1 During the May 2019 elections, a check of each of the existing polling places was completed by the Polling Station Inspector on duty using the Electoral Commission checklist for polling stations.
- 2.2 Formal consultation than began with the publication of the notice of review on 15 July 2019. Elected representatives at all levels, parish councils and current polling places were given notice of the review and it was advertised via media and social media. Organisations concerned with supporting people with disabilities were also contacted directly.
- 2.3 18 responses have been received and are appended (**Appendix A**).
- 2.4 All responses have been considered and contact made with potential or existing polling places to ascertain whether these can provide workable solutions for electors. A list of current polling places, current electorate and a response to any comments received is included at **Appendix B**.
- 2.5 The Electoral Commission recommends that a polling station should not have more than 2,500 electors allocated to it. A polling place may therefore exceed this number, but sufficient polling stations must then be provided.
- 3.0 Conclusion**
- 3.1 Council must complete the review of its polling districts and polling places by 31 January 2020. In view of this timeframe, Council is asked to consider the review to allow any amendments to the register of electors to be made in time for the publication of the revised register of electors on 01 December 2019. Any elections held after this date would be based on the new polling districts and polling places.
- 3.2 If amendments cannot be included in the revised register published on 01 December 2019, the register of electors will have to be re-published on 01 February 2020 and any amendments to arrangements would be effective for elections taking place after that date.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

None.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a duty on local authorities to carry out and complete a review of polling district and polling places within a legislated timeframe.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any costs associated with completing the review will be met from within the existing electoral registration budget, which for 2019/20 is £116,300. The need to republish the register of

electors will have a cost associated with additional officer time in producing data and the need to print and re-distribute paper copies of the register as is a requirement of law.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces**

None.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

It should be noted that there are other polling districts in the Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency, however these are administered by Wyre Borough Council and reviews of those districts are undertaken by that authority.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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