

South Lakeland District Council

Council

17 December 2019

POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

PORTFOLIO:	Not applicable
REPORT FROM:	Simon McVey – Operational Lead Support Services Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer
REPORT AUTHOR:	Tom Benson – Legal, Governance and Democracy Specialist
WARDS:	All
FORWARD PLAN:	Not applicable

1.0 EXPECTED OUTCOME

- 1.1 To ensure that each polling district has a designated and accessible polling place and the implementation of changes recommended by this review will improve the arrangements for voters.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Council note the outcome of the review and**

- (1) approves the renaming of polling districts within Kendal East to match with Kendal Town Council wards and the merging of two Selside polling districts within Kendal Rural as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- (2) approves the designated polling station for Lakes Grasmere (CE) moves from Grasmere Sports Pavilion to Grasmere Village Hall as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- (3) notes that a more detailed review of the polling arrangements in Kendal will commence during 2020.**

3.0 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District into polling districts, with each parish being a separate polling district, and to designate a polling place for each of these polling districts. This authority rests with the Council and the Returning Officer then has a duty to designate a polling station within each of the identified polling places as far as possible (please see the definitions in 3.4 below).
- 3.2 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the 1983 Act, including the requirement for the Council to review UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places arrangements at least every four years. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of such reviews, with the current compulsory review starting and to be completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.

- 3.3 The Council can conduct a review at any time though it does not release them from the duty to carry out a review during the compulsory timeframe.
- 3.4 A definition of polling district, polling place and a polling station is as follows.
- (a) A **polling district** is a geographical sub division of an electoral area, e.g. ward or parish.
 - (b) A **polling place** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. However, as there is no legal definition of what a polling place is, the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district.
 - (c) A **polling station** is the actual premises where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.
- 3.5 The schedule of proposals by the (Acting) Returning Officer, and the final recommendations are attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The review was undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Electoral Commission's guidance document 'Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations' and commenced on 16 September 2019 with the publication of the formal notice and information provided on the Council's website. The consultation period ran until 01 November 2019. The review timetable is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2 A total of 46 responses were received during the consultation period and these are summarised in Appendix 1. Additional consultation was undertaken in respect of the polling arrangements in Grasmere.
- 4.3 It has been suggested that the polling arrangements within Kendal wards may benefit from a more detailed review and it is recommended that this commences during 2020 with more in depth consultation on any proposed changes.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Council can decide not to implement the recommendations contained in this report. This is not recommended since the recommendations put forward are considered necessary to enable the effective administration of forthcoming elections.

6.0 LINKS TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 6.1 More local – involving our communities in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial and Resources

- 7.1.1 There have been minimal costs associated with the polling district review which have been accommodated within existing budgets.

7.2 Human Resources

- 7.2.1 There have been no staffing implications in respect of this review. Staff recruited by the Returning Officer, to undertake duties at polling stations, are on casual contracts.

7.3 Legal

- 7.3.1 The review has been undertaken with respect to all relevant legislation.

7.4 Health, Social, Economic and Environmental

7.4.1

Have you completed and Health, Social, Economic and Environmental Impact Assessment?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please confirm that it is attached to the report in the appendices.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you have not completed an Impact Assessment, please explain your reasons.	<i>This will be further reviewed as part of a more detailed polling district and polling place review.</i>	

7.5 Equality and Diversity

7.5.1

Have you completed an Equality Impact Analysis?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please confirm that it is attached to the report in the appendices.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of equality and diversity impacts.	<i>Recommendations considered suitable</i>	

7.6 Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
There is a risk that electors feel disenfranchised if arrangements are unsatisfactory in their polling district.	Adverse effect on the Council's reputation, and the provision of electoral services in particular	Careful considerations of representations to ensure proposals are appropriate and legally compliant.

CONTACT OFFICERS

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APPENDICES ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT

Appendix No.	
1	Polling District and Polling Place review schedule – Final recommendations – November 2019
2	Polling District and Polling Place review timetable
3	Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Name of Background document	Where it is available (examples as shown)
General information (including maps and responses received)	https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/voting-and-elections/electoral-reviews/polling-district-review/
Representation of the People Act 1983 (Schedule A1)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1983/2/schedule/A1
Electoral Administration Act 2006 (Section 16)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/22/part/4
Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 (Section 17)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/6/section/17/enacted
Electoral Commission guidance	https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews

TRACKING INFORMATION

Assistant Director	Portfolio Holder	Solicitor to the Council	SMT	Scrutiny Committee
n/a	n/a	02.12.19	02.12.19	n/a
Executive (Cabinet)	Committee	Council	Section 151 Officer	Monitoring Officer
n/a	n/a	02.12.19	30.11.17	02.12.19
Human Resource Services Manager	Leader	Ward Councillor(s)		
n/a	n/a	n/a		