

24 November 2015

Report of	Electoral Registration Officer	Author	Sarah Cheek
Title	Polling Districts and Polling Places Review		
Wards affected	All wards		

This report concerns the review of all polling districts and polling stations

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 To consider the proposed changes to polling districts and polling places following the consultation period and to recommend to full council that it be approved and adopted. These changes will come into effect on 5 May 2016.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 Following the meeting held on the 8 September 2015, Colchester Borough Council Governance Committee approved the review of polling districts and voting arrangements in the Borough and a period of 30 days consultation was undertaken, starting on the 14 September 2015.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 None as this review is a statutory requirement.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Colchester Borough Council Electoral Order 2015 was approved by Parliament on the 3rd November 2015. As a consequence following this review the full Register of Electors will be published on the new boundaries on the 1 February 2016. The new electoral arrangements will come into force for the next election on the 5 May 2016. See proposed schedule Appendix A.

Timetable

- 4.1 The timetable for the consultation is as follows:

Governance Committee (approval of consultation draft schedule)	8 September 2015
Notice of Review (commencement of consultation)	14 September 2015
End of consultation period	20 October 2015
Governance Committee to agree final proposals and make recommendation to full council	24 November 2015

Full Council (to ratify the final recommendations)	10 December 2015
Publication of the electoral register	1 February 2016

5. Proposals

- 5.1 For many of the polling districts no change is required and the polling districts and stations will remain the same as it is considered the existing arrangement provide satisfactory facilities for the elector.
- 5.2. Seventy six of the polling district will geographically remain the same but may be incorporated into a ward were the boundary has changed. Where a new boundary will encompasses two of the current wards the polling district will be realigned or incorporated into an existing polling district. The proposed voting arrangements are listed in Appendix B.
- 5.3 It is proposed that two polling places will be changed but these will utilise existing polling stations. See Appendix B.
- 5.4 Should a polling place be unavailable in the run up to an election the (Acting) Returning Officer be given the authority to select an appropriate alternative and formal retrospective approval be sought by the Council following the election should this be a permanent proposed change.
- 5.5 The arrangements will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with further formal reviews taking place on a regular five year cycle.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Having an appropriate polling district and polling station scheme link in with our Strategic Plan aims to be efficient accessible, customer focused and always looking to improve.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires the relevant authority to actively seek representations from;

The Acting Returning Officer for the area of the Constituency the authority covers; and

Any persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

In addition, any elector in the Borough may make representations on the designation of polling places.

- 7.2 Responses were received from the following;

Acting Returning Officer – Witham Constituency
Mary Blandon
Cllr. Martin Goss
Cllr Julie Havis
Myland Community Council
Stanway Parish Council
Mr C Stephens

Rowhedge Residents Association
West Bergholt Parish Council
Wivenhoe Town Council
Cllr. Tim Young

All correspondence have been considered and incorporated in the final recommendation. Consultation responses are set out in Appendix C.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 During the 30 day period of consultation maps and current polling district electorate as well as any other relevant information were available for public inspection as well as details listed on the council's website.
- 8.2 Upon conclusion of the review, any elector who is affected with a change in polling station will be contacted and the new polling location explained.
- 8.3 The final recommendations will be published for public inspection and details listed on the council's website

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 No direct implications.

10 Equality and Diversity implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website.

11. Human Rights, Health & Safety, Community Safety and Risk Management Implications

- 11.1 No direct implications.

Background Papers

Appendix A - Schedule of Polling District and Places
Appendix B - Polling District Boundary Changes
Appendix C - Consultation responses