

Report for Resolution

Report to	Council 27 September 2011	Item 9
Report of	Polling District Review Group	
Subject	Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations	

Purpose

To review Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006) and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

Recommendations

- (1) To maintain the current Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations subject to :-
 - (a) changing the Polling station in Polling District TC4 to the 6th Form Centre, Norwich High School for Girls, Newmarket Road.
 - (b) changing the boundary of Polling District TH5 to follow the river and adding the area south of the river to TH3
- (2) To ask the Returning Officer and Democratic Services Manager to continue to keep the scheme under review to ensure that each polling district has the best possible polling station available for each future election.

Financial Consequences

No direct financial consequences.

Strategic Objective/Service Priorities

The report helps to achieve the corporate objective to make Norwich safe and secure, building strong and proud local communities.

Contact Officers

Philip Hyde Head of law and governance.	01603 212440
Andy Emms Democratic services manager	01603 212459

Background Documents

None

Report

Introduction

1. The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006) and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006, requires that Norwich City Council conducts a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in its area.
2. Local authorities are required to divide their area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts, and to keep these under review. By conducting this statutory review of polling places, local authorities must demonstrate that they have, as far as is practicable, met the following criteria set out in legislation.
 - a. seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting **as are practicable** in the circumstances
 - b. seek to ensure that so far as is **reasonable and practicable**, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.
3. In an ideal world Council's would have the choice of a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for the electors in the area. It is accepted, however, that in practice this is not always the case and there may be little choice available. If it is necessary to use a place where for example, the access is not ideal, then every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access for all electors.
4. The key things local authorities are required to bear in mind when conducting this review is that all decisions made must be consulted upon, measured, and practical. The whole process should be as transparent and open as possible to avoid possible conflict.

Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in Norwich.

5. The review was advertised in the press, on the Council's website and a public notice displayed in City Hall. Details of the current polling districts, polling places and polling stations are always available on the Council's website and details/plans were also made available for personal inspection at City Hall. The consultation period was from 18 July to 2 September, 2011.
6. Invitations to contribute to the review were sent to MPs, MEPs councillors political parties, Broadland District Council and disability groups. A full list of those directly consulted is attached as Appendix A.

Polling Stations

7. The list of polling stations is attached as Appendix B. All polling stations have been inspected and assessed to ensure that they are fully accessible. In some cases this is possible by providing ramps on day of the poll.
8. Comparator data which shows the changes to the number of electorate in each polling district since the last review is attached as Appendix C.

Polling Districts Review Group

9. A cross party review group was set up with the following terms of reference:-

“The Polling Districts Review Group will consider options relating to Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations; consider representations received and make recommendation to Council as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006) and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.”

10. The review group met on Monday 12 September, 2011 and was informed of the following representations received within the consultation period:-
 - An elector commented on the polling station at St Catherine’s Church and supported this as the best option available. The other comments contained in that representation related to parliamentary boundaries which are being considered nationally as part of a separate boundary review.
 - The Returning Officer, who is expected to formally contribute to the review, submitted a letter which is attached at Appendix D. His response reflects the fact that the polling stations are reviewed prior to every election according to availability and he is fully involved in that process. He is happy with the current scheme and his only proposal is that in Polling District TC4 the squash court at East Anglia Tennis Club, Lime Tree Road be replaced as a polling station by the 6th Form Centre at Norwich High School for Girls, Newmarket Road.
11. The Returning Officer and the Democratic services officer emphasised to the review group that continuity was very important. People become used to where they vote and despite all appropriate and statutory notice of change, including poll cards etc, many become confused when change becomes necessary due to unavailability of the regular building. It was, therefore, very important when considering any change to polling arrangements, to be sure that there was clear evidence that the change would benefit the majority of the electorate.

12. Review group members highlighted and debated the following areas :-

Town Close Ward

The Returning Officer explained that his proposal for changing the polling station in Polling District TC4, as detailed above, was based on duty of care for polling station staff who had to work for up to 15 hours with no natural light with the constant noise of squash balls bouncing off the wall of the connected squash court.

Lakenham Ward

A member suggested merging Polling Districts LA1 and LA2 as the two polling stations were close together. Another member said that this had been suggested at the previous review but Council decided that the current arrangements should remain as the two areas were distinct and separate communities.

Thorpe Hamlet Ward

It was suggested that TH5 was a very large district and for those people living south of the River Wensum it was easier to go to the polling station in TH3 which was closer and easier to drive to. It was reported that the Norwich Labour Party, one of the formal consultees, also supported changing the polling district boundary of TH5.

The Returning Officer agreed that changing the boundary of TH5 to follow the river and adding the area south of the river to TH3, would make access easier for the electorate living south of the river; give a more even distribution of the electorate between polling districts and take into account possible future development.

Mancroft Ward

It was reported that Norwich Labour Party had suggested changing polling arrangements in this ward as residents in the south of MA5 had a long way to go to the polling station at Chantry Hall. Introducing a new polling station in the south of the polling district would be beneficial.

It was acknowledged by members that MA5 was a large geographical area but that the current polling station was central. Any change in polling stations would have advantages for some but disadvantages for others. Also, due to the nature of this city centre ward, changing district boundaries was difficult due to the layout of major roads. The returning Officer said that he would keep this area under review.

Wensum

A member said that the Norwich Labour Party had also expressed concern that there was no dedicated polling station in WE3. The Returning Officer said he had personally had several contacts with the organisation that used the old polling station but for their own operational reasons, they were unwilling to allow it to be used.

The Democratic Services Manager said that officers had searched for alternatives in WE3 but none were suitable and available. Sites within the Bowthorpe Hospital had been considered but those offered were difficult to access within this large site and there was no long term certainty the same spaces would be available in future. Operating a double polling station in WE2 was currently the only available option. However, the search would continue and if any suitable premises become available, they will be utilised.

Polling District Review - Consultees. Appendix A

Name

Chloe Smith MP
Simon Wright MP

David Campbell Bannerman - European MP
Christopher Beazley - European MP
Andrew Duff - European MP
Vicky Ford - European MP
Richard Howitt - European MP
Robert Sturdy - European MP
Geoffrey Van Orden - European MP

Cllr Caroline Ackroyd
Cllr Steven Altman
Cllr Brenda Arthur
Cllr Michael Banham
Cllr David Bradford
Cllr James Bremner
Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton
Cllr Denise Carlo
Cllr Keith Driver
Cllr David Fairbairn
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Lucy Galvin
Cllr Ralph Gayton
Cllr Graham Gee
Cllr Niki George
Cllr Deborah Gihawi
Cllr Robert Gledhill
Cllr Lesley Grahame
Cllr Sarah Grenville
Cllr Ash Haynes
Cllr Jo Henderson
Cllr Adrian Holmes
Cllr Paul Cllr Samir Jeraj
Cllr Paul Kendrick
Cllr Jenny Lay
Cllr Stephen Little
Cllr JudithLubbock
Cllr Victoria MacDonald
Cllr Ruth Makoff
Cllr PeterOfford
Cllr Mike Sands
Cllr Sue Sands
Cllr Amy Stammers
Cllr Claire Stephenson
Cllr Jo Storie
Cllr Viv Thomas
Cllr Alan Waters
Cllr Julie Westmacott
Cllr James Wright

Name

County Cllr Richard Bearman
County Cllr Andrew Philip Boswell
County Cllr Charlotte Casmir
County Cllr Richard Edwards
County Cllr Phillip Hardy
County Cllr Marcus Hemsley
County Cllr George Nobbs
County Cllr Mervyn Scutter
County Cllr Jennifer Toms
County Cllr Paul Wells
County Cllr Fiona Williamson

Broadland District Council

Conservative Party
Labour Party
Liberal Democrats
Green Party
UKIP

Norwich Access Group
Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind
Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People

Polling Stations by Electoral Area

Area: Bowthorpe

PD	Stn No	Premises
BO1	1 / BO1	CHAPEL BREAK VILLAGE HALL, HARPSFIELD, NORWICH, NR5 9LG
BO2	2 / BO2	CLOVER HILL VILLAGE HALL, HUMBLEYARD, NORWICH, NR5 9BN
BO3	3 / BO3	FOURWAYS CENTRE, STEVENSON ROAD, NORWICH, NR5 8TN
BO4	4 / BO4	WEST EARLHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, WILBERFORCE ROAD, NORWICH, NR5 8ND
BO5	5 / BO5	BOWTHORPE CHURCH CENTRE, BOWTHORPE HALL ROAD, BOWTHORPE, NORWICH, NR5 9AA

Number of Stations for Area Bowthorpe: 5

Area: Catton Grove

PD	Stn No	Premises
CG1	6 / CG1	GREENFIELDS COMMUNITY CENTRE, IVES ROAD, NORWICH, NR6 6DY
CG2	7 / CG2	CATTON GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL, WESTON ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 3TP
CG3	8 / CG3	CATTON GROVE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GEORGE POPE ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 3RD
CG4	9 / CG4	OAK GROVE CHAPEL, 70 CATTON GROVE ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 3NT
CG5	10 / CG5	ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, 223 SPROWSTON ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 4HZ

Number of Stations for Area Catton Grove: 5

Area: Crome

PD	Stn No	Premises
CR1	11 / CR1	PILLING PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE, PILLING PARK ROAD, NORWICH, NR1 4PA
CR2	12 / CR2	FUGILL GREEN SHELTERED HOUSING, FUGILL GREEN, NORWICH, NR7 9QZ
CR3	13 / CR3	PLUMSTEAD ROAD BRANCH LIBRARY, PLUMSTEAD ROAD, NORWICH, NR1 4JS
CR4	14 / CR4	ST FRANCIS CHURCH, RIDER HAGGARD ROAD, NORWICH, NR7 9UQ
CR5	15 / CR5	FRERE ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE, FRERE ROAD, NORWICH, NR7 9UT

Number of Stations for Area Crome: 5

Area: Eaton

PD	Stn No	Premises
EA1	16 / EA1	EATON PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE, SOUTH PARK AVENUE, NORWICH, NR4 7AZ
EA2	17 / EA2	UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, IPSWICH ROAD (SERVICE ROAD), NORWICH, NR4 6QR
EA3	18 / EA3	EATON ST ANDREW CHURCH HALL, CHURCH LANE, NORWICH, NR4 6NW
EA4	19 / EA4	THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS, GREENWAYS, NORWICH, NR4 6PA
EA5	20 / EA5	EATON PARISH HALL, COLMAN ROAD, NORWICH, NR4 7AW

Number of Stations for Area Eaton: 5

Area: Lakenham

PD	Stn No	Premises
LA1	21 / LA1	TUCKSWOOD LIBRARY, ROBIN HOOD ROAD, NORWICH, NR4 6BX
LA2	22 / LA2	HARFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE, PETERKIN ROAD, NORWICH, NR4 6LQ
LA3	23 / LA3	NORWICH STEINER SCHOOL, HOSPITAL LANE, NORWICH, NR1 2HW
LA4	24 / LA4	JUBILEE CENTRE, LONG JOHN HILL, NORWICH, NR1 2EX
LA5	25 / LA5	OLD LAKENHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, HARWOOD ROAD, NORWICH, NR1 2NG

Polling Stations by Electoral Area

Number of Stations for Area Lakenham: 5

Area: Mancroft

PD	Stn No	Premises
MA1	26 / MA1	COMMUNITY LOUNGE, DOURO PLACE, DOURO PLACE SHELTERED HOUSING, DOURO PLACE, NORWICH, NR2 4BG
MA2	27 / MA2	CITY CHURCH, COWGATE, NORWICH, NR3 1SZ
MA3	28 / MA3	RUSSELL STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE, RUSSELL STREET, NORWICH, NR2 4QT
MA4	29 / MA4	WADDINGTON COURT HOUSING SCHEME, COMMUNITY LOUNGE, WADDINGTON COURT, NORWICH, NR2 4EP
MA5	30 / MA5	CHANCERY HALL, CHANCERY ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 1QZ

Number of Stations for Area Mancroft: 5

Area: Mile Cross

PD	Stn No	Premises
MX1	31 / MX1	ST LUKES CHURCH CENTRE, FUNCTION ROOM, AYLHAM ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 2HF
MX2	32 / MX2	NORMAN CENTRE, BIGNOLD ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 2QZ
MX3	33 / MX3	COMMUNITY ROOM, 16 LARNERS WAY, WHEELER ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 2FB
MX4	34 / MX4	ST CATHERINES CHURCH HALL, MILE CROSS ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 2RJ

Number of Stations for Area Mile Cross: 4

Area: Nelson

PD	Stn No	Premises
NE1	35 / NE1	BELVEDERE COMMUNITY CENTRE, BELVOIR STREET, NORWICH, NR2 3AZ
NE2	36 / NE2	ST PETER'S CHURCH HALL, PARK LANE, NORWICH, NR2 3EQ
NE3	37 / NE3	TRINITY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, 1 UNTHANK ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 2PA
NE4	38 / NE4	SCOUT HEADQUARTERS, JESSOPP ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 3JF

Number of Stations for Area Nelson: 4

Area: Sewell

PD	Stn No	Premises
SE1	39 / SE1	ANGEL ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOL, ANGEL ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 3HS
SE2	40 / SE2	CHRIST CHURCH CENTRE, MAGDALEN ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 4LA
SE3	41 / SE3	SILVER ROOMS DAY CENTRE, SILVER ROAD, NORWICH, NR3 4TB
SE4	42 / SE4	SILVER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, SILVER ROAD, NR3 4TE

/ Number of Stations for Area Sewell: 4

Area: Thorpe Hamlet

PD	Stn No	Premises
TH1	43 / TH1	ST JAMES HOUSE, CANNELL GREEN ENTRANCE, CANNELL GREEN, NR3 1NU
TH2	44 / TH2	MAIDS HEAD HOTEL, WENSUM STREET ENTRANCE, NORWICH, NR3 1LB
TH3	45 / TH3	CROWN ROOM WENSUM LODGE, 169 KING STREET, NORWICH, NR1 1QW
TH4	46 / TH4	ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH, TELEGRAPH LANE WEST, NORWICH, NR1 4JA
TH5	47 / TH5	LANSDOWNE HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE, 116 THORPE ROAD, NORWICH, NR1 1RU

/ Number of Stations for Area Thorpe Hamlet: 5

Polling Stations by Electoral Area

Area: Town Close

PD	Stn No	Premises
TC1	48 / TC1	COMMUNITY LOUNGE, MELBOURNE COTTAGES, MELBOURNE COTTAGES, UNION STREET, NORWICH, NR2 2SW
TC2	49 / TC2	CAMBRIDGE STREET HALL, CAMBRIDGE STREET, NORWICH, NR2 2BA
TC3	50 / TC3	ST ALBANS CHURCH HALL, GROVE WALK, NORWICH, NR1 2QF
TC4	51 / TC4	EAST ANGLIA TENNIS AND SQUASH CLUB, LIME TREE ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 2NQ
Number of Stations for Area Town Close:		
4		

Area: University

PD	Stn No	Premises	
UN1	52 / UN1	ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL, HUTCHINSON ROAD, EARLHAM, NORWICH, NR5 8LB	
UN2	53 / UN2	COMMON ROOM B, NELSON COURT, UNIVERSITY PLAIN, NORWICH, NR4 7JT	
UN3	54 / UN3	GEORGE CARVER COURT, 97A GEORGE CARVER COURT, NORTHFIELDS, NORWICH, NR4 7ET	
UN4	55 / UN4	ST ANNES CHURCH HALL, COLMAN ROAD, NORWICH, NR4 7HD	
UN5	56 / UN5	UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, JESSOPP ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 3QA	
Number of Stations for Area University:			5

Area: Wensum

PD	Stn No	Premises	Electorate
WE1	57 / WE1	MARLPIT COMMUNITY CENTRE, HELLESDON ROAD, NORWICH, NR6 5EQ	
WE2	58 / WE2	WENSUM JUNIOR SCHOOL, TURNER ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 4HB	
WE3	59 / WE3	WENSUM JUNIOR SCHOOL, TURNER ROAD, NORWICH, NR2 4HB	
WE4	60 / WE4	CADGE ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE, CADGE ROAD, NORWICH, NR5 8DA	
Number of Stations for Area Wensum:			4

Electorate comparator data since last review

Appendix C

Polling district	Electorate Dec 2007	Electorate July 2011	Difference	Difference as a %
BO1	2043	1713	-330	-16%
BO2	2659	2765	106	3.99%
BO3	813	789	-24	-2.95%
BO4	1688	1816	128	7.58%
BO5	1120	1359	239	21.34%
CG1	2037	2077	40	1.96%
CG2	1778	1750	-28	-1.57%
CG3	1405	1439	34	2.42%
CG4	1059	1100	41	3.87%
CG5	1595	1574	-21	-1.32%
CR1	1454	1468	14	0.96%
CR2	1212	1247	35	2.89%
CR3	1747	1748	1	0.06%
CR4	1171	1170	-1	-0.09%
CR5	1649	1617	-32	-1.94%
EA1	1172	1211	39	3.33%
EA2	1401	1389	-12	-0.86%
EA3	1755	1824	69	3.93%
EA4	1768	1752	-16	-0.90%
EA5	1191	1193	2	0.17%
LA1	1264	1249	-15	-1.19%
LA2	806	765	-41	-5.09%
LA3	1787	1865	78	4.36%
LA4	2022	2019	-3	-0.15%
LA5	1330	1310	-20	-1.50%
MA1	788	846	58	7.36%
MA2	2269	2520	251	11.06%
MA3	1420	1383	-37	-2.61%
MA4	1247	1292	45	3.61%
MA5	1691	1956	265	15.67%
MX1	1805	1843	38	2.11%

MX2	2559	2572	13	0.51%
MX3	1599	1695	96	6.00%
MX4	1554	1478	-76	-4.89%
NE1	1965	2017	52	2.65%
NE2	1819	1985	166	9.13%
NE3	960	1012	52	5.42%
NE4	2576	2618	42	1.63%
SE1	2527	2439	-88	-3.48%
SE2	1138	1131	-7	-0.62%
SE3	2203	2293	90	4.09%
SE4	1657	1704	47	2.84%
TC1	2170	2619	449	20.69%
TC2	1902	1955	53	2.79%
TC3	3363	3323	-40	-1.19%
TC4	730	718	-12	-1.64%
TH1	1178	1185	7	0.59%
TH2	1172	1289	117	9.98%
TH3	890	1000	110	12.36%
TH4	2274	2347	73	3.21%
TH5	2411	2757	346	14.35%
UN1	1049	1074	25	2.38%
UN2	2414	2539	125	5.18%
UN3	1906	1935	29	1.52%
UN4	865	861	-4	-0.46%
UN5	1139	1344	205	18.00%
WE1	2404	2335	-69	-2.87%
WE2	1433	1516	83	5.79%
WE3	792	816	24	3.03%
WE4	3290	3551	261	7.93%
Total	99085	102157	3072	3.10%

Norwich City Council
City Hall
St Peter's Street
Norwich
NR2 1NH

Andy Emms
Democratic Services Manager

5 September 2011

Our reference PH/as

Dear Andy

Polling District and Places Review 2011

This letter sets out my views as Returning Officer for Norwich by way of response to the above consultation exercise currently in progress.

I have been in post since 2009 and I have seen the review which took place in 2007.

Since 2009, I have been the Returning Officer in Norwich responsible for a general election, two council-wide local elections and a national referendum. During this time, it has been necessary to carefully assess polling district and station requirements. Whilst the relatively small geographical size of the area has meant that options are limited, a small number of changes to polling stations have been necessitated by local circumstances. In effect therefore the lead up to each election warrants a review in itself. By way of example in May 2011 we were able to utilise the Community Room at Larners Way, removing the need to have two stations at the Norman Centre on Bignold Road (MX2/3) which had been used since the loss of the longstanding polling station at the former Mile Cross Primary School on Valpy Avenue. In future I would also expect to seek to utilise a new building at Norwich High School for Girls in Newmarket Road as a more suitable venue for a polling station as opposed to the current polling station East Anglia Tennis and Squash Club in Lime Tree Road (TC4) where the voting takes place in the squash court itself.

There are some minor variances in total electorate within different Polling Districts. However, these are well within the parameters that allow me to undertake an efficient election and accurate count.

Subject to these general comments, the ongoing review (and the one specific proposal), I consider the current polling district and polling station provision to be appropriate for the prevailing circumstances in Norwich.

Yours sincerely

Philip Hyde
Returning Officer

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