

**East Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Representation of the People Act 1983
Electoral Administration Act 2006
The Review of Polling District & Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Background information and the Returning Officer's proposals

John Hill, Returning Officer

Consultation Period: 30 July 2019 – 30 September 2019

If you have any comments or questions please contact:

Joan Cox
Electoral Services Team Leader
The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambs
CB7 4EE

joan.cox@eastcambs.gov.uk or
elections@eastcambs.gov.uk

1. Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the district of East Cambridgeshire.

1.1 The reason for the review

The Representation of the People Act places a duty on the Council to divide the District into polling districts and to designate polling places for each district. The Council also has a duty to keep those arrangements under review.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA 2006) introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The first such review had to be completed by the end of 2007.

The Council must conduct a review of the polling districts, polling places and polling stations for the South East Cambridgeshire parliamentary constituency that fall within the boundaries of the District of East Cambridgeshire, and for the North East Cambridgeshire parliamentary constituency that fall within the boundaries of the District of East Cambridgeshire.

The Returning Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council will also make representations to South Cambridgeshire District Council for the polling district, polling places and polling stations that fall under his control during the parliamentary elections, as part of the South East Cambs parliamentary constituency falls within South Cambridgeshire district boundaries.

The Returning Officer for Fenland District Council will make representations to this review for the polling districts, polling places and polling stations that fall under their control during parliamentary election, as part of the North East Cambridgeshire Parliamentary constituency falls within East Cambridgeshire district boundaries.

The last such review was conducted in 2014. The Returning Officer has also made several changes with regard to premises that can be designated as polling stations since the last review.

The Council must conduct a full review of its polling districts, polling places and polling stations by 31 January 2020, and thereafter every five years from 1 October 2018. However, this does not prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review in October 2023.

Most of the arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.

1.2 How the review is conducted

The Members of Full Council are delegated to deal with this matter, and the legislation lays down how the review is to be conducted. On Commencement of the review the Returning Officer will be asked to make his representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The Council will publish the Returning Officer's proposals and will invite comments. The members will consider these before final recommendations are made to the Council on 17 October 2019.

The consultation must seek comments from people who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have disabilities.

Any elector may make representations. It is proposed that the consultation will also include local political parties, district ward councillors, county councillors for East Cambridgeshire divisions, access group, local MP's, returning officers for parliamentary constituencies that fall within East Cambridgeshire boundaries and parish councils.

1.3 The role of the Electoral Commission

The Commission, while not having a direct responsibility for the review, can intervene where it considers that the reasonable requirements of electors or the needs of disabled electors have not been taken into account.

The following can 'appeal' to the Commission:

- Any parish council which falls within the constituency;
- Not less than thirty registered electors in the constituency;
- any person who has made representations during the review;
- any person who is not an elector in the constituency but who has sufficient interest or expertise in access to premises or facilities for disabled persons.

The Commission could direct the Council to alter any polling arrangements that arise from the review, and the Commission could make these alterations itself if the Council failed to respond within two months.

1.4 Our timetable for this review

Notice of start of review - 30 July

Council publishes the Returning Officer's proposals – 30 July

Consultation on this proposal ends on – 30 September

Report to Full Council – Thursday 17 October

Adoption by Council – Thursday 18 October

Arrangements come into force at the publication

of the next revised Register of Electors – 1 December 2019

1.5 Making Comments

Anyone intending to make comments is strongly urged to read the introductory comments to the Returning Officer's proposals. The Returning Officer has found that, by and large, the boundaries of our polling districts are co-terminous with the existing District and parish ward boundaries. Therefore, the Returning Officer, who considers that change for change's sake should be avoided in the review because it proves disruptive to the electors and their convenience, has recommended few changes.

That said, comments are still welcomed, and an early notification where major alterations are proposed will be appreciated, because it will enable the Electoral Services Officer to enter into further and more detailed consultation where required.

Comments that support the Returning Officer's proposals are also welcomed because they will provide a balance of opinions.

Comments should be made in writing to:

Joan Cox
Electoral Services Team Leader
The Grange

Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambs
CB7 4EE

elections@eastcambs.gov.uk
joan.cox@eastcambs.gov.uk

Throughout the review, all working papers, minutes of meetings and correspondence will be available for public inspection at the Elections Office. All items will be published when the review has been completed.

2. The Returning Officer's Proposals

2.1 Introduction

The pattern of polling districts and polling places in the District of East Cambridgeshire has evolved to meet successive boundary changes to district and parish wards and to meet the convenience of electors across the district. By and large, it ensures that electors have reasonable facilities for voting. Furthermore, in line with the Council's policies, every attempt has been made to ensure that polling stations are accessible to electors with disabilities. Therefore, the proposals for change have been kept to a minimum.

2.2 Guidelines

The Returning Officer has taken the following considerations into account when drawing up the proposals. Comments made during the consultation should keep these in mind. The first four are requirements laid down in the Representation of the People Act; the remainder are guidelines only.

- The council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- The council must seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to electors with disabilities;
- Every parish shall be in a separate polling district;
- Ideally the polling place should be in the polling district;
- No polling station should be shared by two wards because of the risks associated with holding different elections in the same polling station;
- Ideally there should be no more than 2,500 electors per polling district, although the number of postal voters in the district (presently about 6,500, in an electorate of 65,500) is a further consideration.
- Polling district boundaries should be co-terminous with existing parish ward or district ward boundaries.
- Where existing polling districts serve no necessary function because the electors for each polling district already vote at the same polling station, the polling districts should be merged;
- A polling station costs about £3,000 to hire, equip and staff for polling day;
- The proposals have been mindful of further development in the district as identified in the Local Development Framework.

2.3 The Tables

Following a summary of the proposed changes, each district ward is dealt with separately. The tables show the existing polling arrangements in each district ward;

- The polling district identity letters
- The polling place for the district
- The polling station at that place
- The number of electors on 2 May 2019 (the date of the last elections)
- Disabled access, including where this is achieved by the use of a temporary ramp.

A map showing the present polling districts follows the tables.

2.4 Glossary of terms

District wards – The division of the district into areas for the purpose of electing councillors to represent its different parts. The district of East Cambridgeshire is divided into 14 district wards, but the wards are **not** the subject of this review.

Boundary reviews – the reviews of the boundaries of parishes, district or parliamentary constituencies. Boundary reviews are **not** part of this review.

Electoral arrangements – the allocation of councillors to a council and the division of a parish or district into wards with the allocation of councillors to wards. The electoral arrangements of the parishes and of the district are **not** the subject of this review.

Parish wards – the division of a parish into areas for the purpose of electing councillors to represent the different parts of the same parish, eg the parish of Ely is divided into four wards; the parish of Coveney is an unwarded parish. The parish wards are **not** the subject of this review.

Polling arrangements – the provision of reasonable and convenient facilities for the electors to cast their votes by the division of a constituency into polling districts with polling places and polling stations

Polling district – an area in the constituency for which the electors vote together at the same polling place.

Polling district letters – three letters that distinguish the polling district and that, together with the elector's number from the register of electors for that district, make up the elector's distinctive and unique electoral registration number. The polling district letters in the part of South East Cambridgeshire parliamentary constituency that falls within East Cambridgeshire boundaries have district letters ranging from HA through to MK.

Polling place – a readily identifiable place within the polling district to which the electors will go to vote.

Polling station – the building or part of a building at the polling place, which will serve as the venue for the poll; the extent of the polling station will depend upon local circumstances.

Summary of proposed changes:

The Returning Officer has carried out two similar reviews in the last 2 years so he has no new proposals to make for this review. But he is minded that an alternative venue needs to be found whilst the Vernon Cross Room of the Ely Museum is out of action whilst they undertake extensive refurbishments.

The Tables: Existing polling district, polling places and polling stations and the returning officers proposals

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Bottisham Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
KA1	Bottisham	Community Sports & Social Club Downing Close	1745	Yes
KC1	Lode	Fassage Hall Station Road	683	Yes
KD1	Reach	Reach Village Hall Fair Green	276	Yes
KE1	Swaffham Bulbeck	Downing Court Communal Room	671	Yes
KF1	Swaffham Prior	Swaffham Prior Village Hall High Street	664	Yes
MB1	Brinkley	Brinkley Memorial Hall High Street	301	Yes
MI6	Westley Waterless	Westley Waterless Village Hall Main Street	127	Yes with ramp
Returning Officer's Proposals				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Burwell Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
KB1	Burwell	Burwell Baptist Church Hall x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	2382	Yes
KB2	Burwell	The Gardiner Memorial Hall High Street x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	2489	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

North East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Downham Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Places	Polling Stations	Electors	Disabled Access
IA1	Coveney	Coveney Village Hall School Lane	347	Yes
IB1	Downham South	Little Downham Village Centre Main Street	1694	Yes
ID1	Downham North	Pymoor Methodist Church Main Street	332	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Ely East Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling Districts	Polling Places	Polling Stations	Electors	Disabled Access
HA6	Stuntney	Stuntney Social Club Soham Road	226	Yes
HF1	Ely North	Larkfield Resource Centre High Barns x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	2695	Yes
HG1	Ely East	St Peter's Church Hall Broad Street	645	Yes
HK1	Ely East	Vernon Cross Room The Old Gaol House Lynn Road	980	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
In the Interim Review from 2017 for the County Divisions we identified the possible use of the City of Ely Council offices or Bell Holt Community Room as an alternative to the Vernon Cross Rooms, but would welcome any other suggestions on alternative venues. The refurbishments on The Museum are due to start Summer of 2019 for at least 12 months.				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Ely North Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling Districts	Polling Places	Polling Stations	Electors	Disabled Access
HC1	Prickwillow	Prickwillow Village Hall Main Street	428	Yes
HD6	Queen Adelaide	Queen Adelaide Village Hall Prickwillow Road	180	Yes
HF2	Ely North	Conference Room Princess of Wales Hospital	2436	Yes with ramp
HJ6	Chettisham	St Michael and All Angels Church Chettisham	112	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposals				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Ely West Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling Districts	Polling Places	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
HH1	Ely East	The Forum Barton Road	754	Yes
HI1	Ely West	Ely Methodist Church Chapel Street x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	3465	Yes
HI2	Ely South	Guide Hall St Johns Road x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	3243	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Fordham & Isleham Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling Districts	Polling Places	Polling Stations	Electors	Disabled Access
LA1	Chippenham	Chippenham Village Hall High Street	386	Yes
LB1	Fordham	Victoria Hall Carter Street	2084	Yes
LC1	Isleham	The Beeches Mill Street	1831	Yes
LE1	Kennett	Kennett Pavilion Station Road	275	Yes
LI6	Snailwell	The Conservatory Room of The George & Dragon Public House	131	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Haddenham Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling Districts	Polling Places	Polling Stations	Electors	Disabled Access
JA1	Haddenham	Arkenstall Centre Station Road x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	2438	Yes
JB1	Aldreth	Aldreth Village Centre High Street	205	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

North East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Littleport Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Places	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
IE1	Littleport	The Vine Community Rooms x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	2984	Yes
IF1	Littleport	Littleport Village Hall Victoria Street x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	3746	Yes
IG1	Littleport	The Community Centre Black Horse Drove	139	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Soham North Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
LF1	Soham North	Town Rangers Football Club Julius Martin Lane x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	3936	Yes with ramp
LG1	Soham Central	The Walter Gidney Pavilion Recreation Ground	987	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Soham South Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
LG2	Soham South	The Walter Gidney Pavilion Recreation Ground	2218	Yes
LG3	Soham South	The Walter Gidney Pavilion Recreation Ground	1622	
LJ1	Wicken	The Mission Hall High Street	663	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposals				
No Change				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Stretham Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
JD1	Stretham	Stretham Church Hall	1556	Yes
JF1	Thetford	Little Thetford Village Hall The Wyches	575	Yes
JH1	Wilburton	St Peters Hall High Street	1026	Yes
JJ1	Witchford	St Andrews Hall Main Street x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	1908	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposal				
No Change				

North East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Sutton Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
JC1	Mepal	Mepal Village Hall School Lane	790	Yes
JE1	Sutton	The Royal British Legion Hall x2 stations, one station deals with addresses from streets A-K and the second deals with addresses from streets L-Z.	3067	Yes
JG1	Wentworth	Wentworth Hall Church Road	131	Yes
JI1	Witcham	Witcham Village Hall Martins Lane	356	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposals				
No Change				
Please note that although JG1 Wentworth forms part of Sutton Ward it is in fact still part of the South East Cambridgeshire Parliamentary Constituency.				

South East Cambridgeshire Constituency – Woodditton Ward

Existing Arrangements				
Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	Disabled Access
MA1	Ashley	Ashley Village Hall High Street	438	Yes
MC1	Burrough Green	Burrough Green Village Hall	316	Yes
MD1	Cheveley North	Newmarket Town Football Club Cricket Field Road	714	Yes
ME1	Cheveley South	Cheveley Primary School Community Room High Street	847	Yes
MF1	Dullingham	The Taylor Hall Church Close	579	Yes
MG1	Kirtling	Kirtling Village Hall	263	Yes
MH1	Stetchworth	Ellesmere Centre Ley Road	525	Yes
MJ1	Woodditton Urban	Newmarket Town Football Club Cricket Field Road	901	Yes
MK1	Woodditton Rural	Parsonage Farm Barns Parsonage Farm Lane	249	Yes
MK2	Woodditton Rural	Methodist Church Saxon Street	245	Yes
The Returning Officer's Proposals				
No Change				

General Comments

Please note that due to the LGBCE completing the County and District Review and this Council has completed a district wide Community Governance Review (CGR) to amend all of the known boundary anomalies following these reviews, there are still two boundary anomalies that cannot be fully rectified until the next Parliamentary review takes place.

As it currently stands we have one property now in Haddenham that will be placed in its own register that still sits in the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency, and we will ask the LGBCE if they would be minded to move it into the South East Cambridgeshire Constituency to be contiguous with all other boundaries for Haddenham.

As it currently stands we have four properties now in Ely West that will be placed in their own register that still sits in the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency, and we will ask the LGBCE if they would be minded to move them into the South East Cambridgeshire Constituency to be contiguous with all other boundaries for Ely West.

Please note that the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) have not completed their current Parliamentary Boundary review, but it is too late to ask them to consider the two anomalies as mentioned above. Please also note that once they have completed their current review it is their intention to move Littleport Ward from North East Cambridgeshire County Constituency to Thetford and Downham Market County Constituency.

Following the District and Parish Elections and the European elections earlier this year, we have received general feedback both from the polling station inspectors and the polling station staff on some minor improvements needed to their polling stations. They are as follows:

Consider the use of external lighting at Queen Adelaide Village Hall, Chettisham Church and The Conference Room at the Princess of Wales Hospital Ely.

Internal display boards for the various notices needed at St Peters Hall Ely, The Guide Hut St Johns Road Ely, and Walter Gidney Pavilion Soham.

Please mind the step notice required at Littleport Village Hall – we asked the Hall if this could be repaired between the elections, but was still a trip hazard at Europeans.

Please mind the step notice needed at the George & Dragon Snailwell, small lip on entrance door is a trip hazard.

Please mind the step notice needed at Brinkley Memorial Hall, there is a small trip step just inside the door.

A small wooden ramp is required at Westley Waterless.

Issues that are outside the remit of this review:-

The gravel driveway at Coveney is not suitable for people with mobility issues.

Lack of on-street parking outside St Andrews Hall Witchford for people with mobility issues.

Lack of on-street parking outside of the Methodist Church Ely for people with mobility issues.

Comments received from the review:-

Ely Community Centre are unable to guarantee the use of the building as they are currently undergoing a review of their services and may relocate another service to their site.

Stuntney Social Club are unable to guarantee the use of the hall as it is currently undergoing a review as to whether the Social Club will continue, it is uncertain at this stage as to whether the owner would allow us to use the hall or if they have other plans for the site.

Cllr C Ambrose Smith – Agreed all three current venues are easily accessible & reasonably central for the areas covered – The only other possible building would be Littleport Leisure on the Schools campus on Camel Road. This would provide more parking but would be a considerable distance for pedestrians, many of whom are elderly. Using school facilities (currently LECA, Community Primary or Millfield Primary) would disrupt the school day for pupils. The two primary schools also have parking issues at the start & end of the school day.

Littleport Parish Council wrote to inform us that they may be having a new entrance floor laid but would not affect the use of the hall for elections.

Kirtling Village Hall Trustees wrote to advise that they are having a new entrance to the village hall, but there were alternative ways of entering the hall and should not impact any elections.

Burwell Parish Council – wrote to advise that they are due to have some renovation/building work on the Gardiner Memorial Hall within the next four years. Should this coincide with an election they have offered the use of Mandeville Hall in Tan House Lane as an alternative venue.

The Access Group – They are happy with the overall accessibility arrangements. The elections office is always very diligent over access, and have it pretty much covered. Of course if anything arises they will let us know and if you need to consult us they are happy to help if they can.