

ELECTORAL MATTERS

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1.0 Summary

- 1.2 This report concerns the need to undertake a countywide review of polling district, polling places and polling stations in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) and the request for Community Governance Reviews received from Craven Arms Town Council and Tasley Parish Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended:

- (a) That the Council approves the completion of a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations throughout the county in advance of the Local Government Elections in 2013.
- (b) That, subject to the Community Governance Review Working Party first approving the terms and reference for each review, Community Governance Reviews be undertaken in both Craven Arms and Tasley in advance of the 2013 local government elections.

REPORT

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Every authority must complete a review of each polling district, polling place and polling station within its area every four years. The best time to commence such a review is immediately after a district-wide election so that there is good information about the current arrangements, and sufficient time to implement any necessary improvements before the next district-wide event.

- 3.2 The main purpose of the review is to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting and that all polling stations are accessible to electors who are disabled. The regulations also state that every parish should be its polling district and that every polling place should, wherever possible, be within its own polling district.
- 3.3 Guidance issued by the Electoral Commission stipulates how reviews should be conducted in four stages. The first stage requires the Council to give public notice of its intention to conduct the review. The second requires the Council to review the existing polling arrangements to determine their suitability, or otherwise. The third stage requires the Council to consult widely. This includes local electors, interested groups and bodies, including political parties, elected members and organisations experienced in assessing the needs of people with disabilities.
- 3.4 The final stage relates to the consideration of proposals for changes to polling district boundaries and polling places by the Council, as these can require alterations to be made to the electoral register. It is planned that any changes resulting from the review would be incorporated into the annual review and published on 1 December 2012 in advance of the Local Government Elections the following May.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the Council approves the early commencement of such a review and that progress be overseen by the Community Governance Review Working Party.

4.0 Community Governance Reviews

- 4.1 Requests for Community Governance Reviews have been received from Craven Arms Town Council, which is seeking to reduce the overall size of the Council and Tasley Parish Council, which is looking to increase its size, following substantial recent development within the area.
- 4.2 It is recommended that, subject to the Community Governance Review Working Party first approving the terms of reference for each review, both reviews be undertaken in advance of the Local Government elections in 2013.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended)

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The contents of this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights act 1998

Environmental Appraisal

Not Applicable

Risk Management Appraisal

The Council is obliged to conduct a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations on a regular basis and to undertake such Community Governance Reviews as are required to keep the electoral arrangements within its area up to date.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

As required by statute.

Cabinet Member

Keith Barrow

Local Member

All

Appendices

None