

Minutes of the Democracy and Standards Committee held at 7pm on Monday 12 August, 2024, at the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby, Northants, NN17 1QG

**Present: -**

Councillor Andy Mercer (Chair)  
Councillor Jean Addison  
Councillor Emily Fedorowycz  
Councillor Matt Keane  
Councillor Graham Lawman  
Councillor Barbara Jenney

Councillor Dorothy Maxwell  
Councillor Bill McElhinney  
Councillor Kevin Watt  
Councillor Jonathan Ekins

**Officers: -**

Sanjit Sull, Director of Law and Governance  
Heather Jackson, Head of Electoral Services  
Carol Mundy, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Committees and Members)  
Emma Robinson, Democratic Services Assistant.

The chair welcomed members and the viewing public to the meeting.

**97 Apologies for absence**

**Resolved** that apologies for absence were noted from Councillors Armour, W Brackenbury, Carter, Marks and Jelley.

(Councillors Ekins and Jenney attended the meeting as substitutes).

**98 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 were received.

It was proposed by Councillor Mercer and seconded by Councillor Keane that the minutes be approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting. On being put to the vote this was declared carried.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of 4 June 2024 be approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**99 Members Declarations of Interest (if any)**

**Resolved** to note there were no declarations of interest.

**100 Polling District and Polling Places Review 2024**

The circulated report of the Director of Law & Governance was received to seek approval for a further review of polling districts and polling places to reflect new electoral arrangements for North Northamptonshire Council to take effect in time for the local government parish and town council elections in May 2025.

The report was presented to committee by Heather Jackson, Head of Electoral Services. She set out the legal framework and detailed the proposed plan for the completion of the review by 30 November 2024.

The committee asked if information on the new boundaries could be provided. Miss Jackson confirmed that she was working with the Communications Team and this information would be available on the website. She would also arrange for this to be circulated with the Member Bulletin.

A question was asked about whether provision for future polling places on the new urban extensions would be considered. Miss Jackson confirmed that this would be looked at during the review.

Reference was made to the previous use of portacabins as polling stations and whether there was guidance on the size of polling districts. It was confirmed that polling districts could be of different sizes and frequently were, where possible the use of portacabins would be avoided.

Regarding the use of schools, it was confirmed that an elections officer would be delegated to liaise with any school, where it was the only option available. Where possible schools would not be used.

A request was made for polling places to be located near to transport links/bus stops and that accessibility for wheelchair users be priority. This was noted and best endeavours to use a location near to good transport links was always given, accessibility was also high priority, and suitable adaptations and/or assistance were available at polling stations.

A further question regarding the use of licensed premises was raised. The officer confirmed that it was permitted to use licensed premises, but their use was in exceptional circumstances where there was no alternative option.

It was proposed by Councillor Ekins and seconded by Councillor McElhinney that the recommendations in the report be put to the vote. The chair put the motion to the vote, and it was declared carried.

**Resolved that:**

- (i) the commencement of a further polling district and places review on 19 August 2024 be approved;
- (ii) the outline timetable for the review, as detailed in the report, be approved;
- (iii) the Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to take the necessary measures to give effect to local government boundary changes following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of electoral arrangements for North Northamptonshire;
- (iv) the Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to take the necessary measures to give effect to any new or amended polling districts on completion of the polling district review, ensuring the register reflects the new boundaries that will take effect for the elections on 1 May 2025;
- (v) delegated power be given to the Director of Law and Governance to designate polling places in accordance with sections 18 and 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983, such power to be exercised only in

circumstances where a decision is required at short notice and it is not possible to await a decision of the Democracy and Standards Committee.

**101 Any other items that the chair decides is urgent**

The chair referenced the minutes of the 4 June 2024 and informed the committee that an email had been circulated with some updated information about the recruitment process for the appointment of co-opted members to the committee.

Some members said they had yet to see the update and it was agreed that this would be recirculated for the avoidance of doubt.

**Resolved** that the information be noted.

**102 Close of meeting**

There being no further business the chair closed the meeting at 7.30pm

Chair.....

Date .....