

22 October 2014

Dear Councillor

**ELECTORAL WORKING GROUP**

A meeting of the Electoral Working Group will be held at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden on Tuesday, 28 October 2014 at 5.00pm.

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

**A G E N D A**

- 1 Apologies and declarations of interest.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2014.
- 3 Business arising.
- 4 Final proposals for revised scheme.
- 5 Any other business.

To: Councillors **R Chambers**, J Davey, A Dean, J Freeman, E Hicks, J Ketteridge, M Lemon and J Rose

Lead Officer: Peter Snow (01799 510430)

Democratic Services Officer: Rebecca Dobson (01799 510433)

**ELECTORAL WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 18 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 5pm**

Present: Councillor R Chambers – Chairman.  
Councillors J Davey, E Hicks, J Ketteridge and J Rose.

Officers in attendance: J Mitchell (Chief Executive), P Snow (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager) and R Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

**EWG6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean and Lemon.

**EWG7 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2014 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**EWG8 PROPOSED SCHEME FOR STAGE TWO CONSULTATION**

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager said a number of representations had been received in response to the first stage of the consultation on a draft polling scheme. He invited Members to consider the comments where these related to proposed changes. He advised the impact of current or ongoing development should be taken into account, but with regard to future development, further review would be necessary at a later stage.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager highlighted the fact that a number of responses related to Little Dunmow, some of which recommended returning to use of the Fitch of Bacon Public House as the polling building rather than the Community Hall at the Recreation Ground. The reasons for considering the public house less satisfactory were based on the lack of a proper car park and concerns about the privacy of the area screened off for polling, which was the restaurant area of the public bar. However the Recreation Ground was further from the centre of the village and along an unlit lane. The two buildings would be the subject of a site visit with the Access Officer, Sue Locke to assess the location, facilities and access to these buildings, and a report on those visits would be brought to Members.

Councillor Davey asked about alternative polling buildings in Little Dunmow. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager said St Mary's Church had been assessed some years ago, and whilst it was more central, the Community Room had at the time seemed more suitable. However, the Church could be included in the schedule of site visits in order to carry out a review of its suitability for use as a polling building.

Members considered maps showing areas of current and potential new developments in relation to possible new polling district boundaries within wards.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager referred to specific buildings to be assessed in site visits:

### **Great Dunmow**

- The United Reformed Church in New Street, Great Dunmow

Representations had been received after the European Parliamentary Election from an elector who was a wheelchair user, regarding difficulties she had experienced in accessing the building. A report on this building would be brought to the next meeting.

- The Reid Rooms, Margaret Roding

There was no designated building at present, due to the fact that in the recent past The Reid Rooms had not always been available as they were used for weddings. The Church had once been used, as had a building which was part of The Reid Rooms' stable block. An assessment of The Reid Rooms would be carried out including discussions with the owner regarding availability.

### **Saffron Walden**

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager said all Saffron Walden wards were affected by the ward boundary changes following last year's review of the Council's electoral arrangements. In addition to the ward boundary changes, there were development sites to be taken into account.

Members considered the map provided, and commented as follows.

### **Audley Ward**

Members were reminded that although the Friends' School was used as the polling place for Audley Ward, it was located in Shire Ward. On two occasions the Council had had to use a mobile unit at the School. The polling building had in the past been The Assembly Room, but unfortunately that building was not always available as it was used by the school for examinations. For the most recent election, the European Parliamentary Election, the Council had used the car park near the Sports Hall to site a mobile unit.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager said the School had indicated it would be willing to allow its car park to be used for a mobile unit for future elections. However, for an expected high turnout election the use of a mobile unit was not acceptable.

Alternative polling places for Audley Ward which could be assessed were the Council Offices or Saffron Walden County High School ("SWCHS").

Members commented on the fact that for most voters SWCHS was at quite some distance.

The possibility of using the Sports Hall rather than the Assembly Rooms at the Friends' School was put forward. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager said he would explore that possibility with the School. If the Friends' School were to be used, it should be on the basis that a secure guarantee should be given that a particular building would be permanently available.

It was agreed to include in the site visits the above locations.

### **Shire Ward**

The number of electors for Shire North was approaching the acceptable limit of 3000. Members considered the following buildings:

#### **Golden Acre Community Centre/Katherine Semar School**

The polling district required a building which would accommodate two polling stations. An assessment some years ago had concluded the internal dimensions were of limited size, therefore a visit to both the above buildings would be carried out to compare the two sites.

#### **R A Butler School**

The electorate served by the R A Butler School was increasing from 2000, and whilst the room used at the School was adequate for a small election, it was not suitable for a parliamentary election. The question of whether the Hall could be used, which would mean closing the School, would be addressed with the school authorities.

#### **Thomas More School**

Members noted the facilities had been assessed in the past, and were not considered particularly good.

#### **Four Acres**

The Common Room was agreed to be too small to accommodate properly the two polling stations which were required for the number of electors.

Members noted there were few options other than schools for use as polling stations.

Councillor Ketteridge said where polling stations were located in the centre of Saffron Walden in streets where traffic wardens patrolled, measures to plan for electors' parking should be considered and shared with the parking partnership to minimise difficulties on polling day.

In response to a member question about statutory powers regarding polling station sites, the Democratic and Electoral Services Officer said the Returning

Officer's powers enabled the use of publicly maintained buildings, including academies, free of charge other than costs such as heating. The powers did not therefore apply to private schools such as the Friends' or Dame Bradbury schools.

Councillor Ketteridge asked whether the Council Offices could be used for polling.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer said the Staff Room had previously been used but it had drawbacks in that the internal room space was restricted by pillars which made it difficult to set out the room in a suitable way for a double polling station. The projected turnout of 70% for the forthcoming election and the fact that it was a combined poll meant great care was needed to ensure there were adequate suitable buildings available.

### **Stansted Mountfitchet**

The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer highlighted the changes made during the electoral boundaries review.

### **St Mary's Primary School, Forest Hall Park**

The new building for St Mary's would be assessed by undertaking a site visit.

### **Great Dunmow**

Members considered the impact on the polling districts in the area of Great Dunmow. The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer reported that the parish council for Little Easton had requested a community governance review to consider the parish boundaries in respect of the sector 4 development. A further potential development site of 600-700 houses west of the by-pass was currently the subject of an appeal. Members agreed any governance review should be deferred until the outcome of the appeal was known.

It was agreed to proceed with the consultation on the basis that Members would evaluate polling places in light of the further information reported from the site visits.

The Democratic and Electoral Services Officer outlined the next steps, which were to write to consultees under the second stage of the consultation; to undertake site visits to existing or prospective polling stations in order to assess their suitability for use, and to then prepare a polling scheme which would incorporate further proposals for members to consider. An extraordinary meeting of Council would be called on 11 November in order to receive the Working Group's recommendations.

EWG9

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be at 5pm on 28 October 2014. The meeting ended at 5.45pm.

**Committee: Electoral Working Group**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 28 October 2014**

**4**

**Title: Review of polling districts and places:  
Final proposals for a revised polling  
scheme**

**Author: Peter Snow**

Item for decision

**Democratic and Electoral Services Manager**

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## Summary

1. Members are invited to consider final proposals for a revised polling scheme, to be recommended to Full Council on 11 November 2014. Since the last meeting of the Electoral Working Group, stage 2 consultation has taken place, and site visits to assess potential polling places and buildings have been undertaken. This report informs members of the outcome of these site assessment visits; reports on the small number of further representations which have been received under the stage 2 consultation and presents draft final proposals for consideration.

## Recommendations

2. To recommend to Full Council adoption of final proposals and statement of reasons for a revised polling scheme, as set out in appendix A to this report.

## Financial Implications

3. *There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation:*

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

All papers referred to have already been published.

## Impact

- 5.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Communication/Consultation | By publication on the Council's website and by direct consultation with all interested parties |
| Community Safety           | No direct impact   |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Equalities                      | Take account of the need to designate where possible only fully accessible buildings |
| Health and Safety               | See under Equalities above   |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | The Council must comply with legislation in conducting compulsory reviews            |
| Sustainability                  | No impact  |
| Ward-specific impacts           | All wards  |
| Workforce/Workplace             | No implications  |

## Situation

6. At the previous meeting of the working group on 18 September the group evaluated representations received during stage 1 consultation and considered proposals for a revised polling scheme. A draft proposed scheme of polling arrangements was agreed and published for stage 2 consultation. The proposals were published on the Council's website and consultees notified and encouraged to submit comments.
7. The stage 2 consultation started on 22 September and will close on Friday 24 October. At the date of preparation of this report, seven further representations have been received. Copies are attached to this report at Appendix C. Any further representations which are will be supplied to members at the meeting. Members are requested to refer also to the packs of representations supplied at the previous meeting (comprising the main bundle of representations circulated with the agenda plus a smaller set of representations which were tabled at the meeting).
8. Officers undertook site visits to those potential polling places which were the subject of proposals in representations. Reports of site visits are attached as Appendix B.
9. Members are invited to consider the final proposals and information relating to specific polling places where representations have been received and site visits made. In order that the final scheme may be adopted prior to the publication of the revised electoral register on 1 December 2014, members are asked to approve the final polling scheme proposals and statement of reasons and to recommend their adoption by Full Council on 11 November 2014.

## Risk Analysis

10.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|------|------------|--------|--------------------|
|------|------------|--------|--------------------|

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| 3 – the purpose of the review is to identify suitable arrangements for polling in every polling district | 2 – action may be needed to change polling places in some areas and to identify new places where ward boundaries have changed | 3 – the impact of continuing to operate an unsuitable polling scheme would be significant | Full consultation and proper examination of all potential polling premises as part of the statutory review |
|--|---|---|--|

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



**Proposed Scheme of Revised Polling Districts in Uttlesford from 1 December 2014**

| PD ref | Ward                         | Polling District  | Electorate<br>July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| AAA    | Ashdon                       | Ashdon            | 716                     | Ashdon Village Hall<br>Polling place and district boundary satisfactory, no change proposed   |
| AAB    | Ashdon                       | Hadstock          | 275                     | Hadstock Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AAC    | Ashdon                       | Little Walden     | 179                     | Little Walden Village Hall<br>Minor change proposed – this is to align the polling district boundary with the new ward boundary (from December 2014) dividing Ashdon ward from Saffron Walden Castle ward as defined in The Uttlesford (Electoral Changes) Order 2014.<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of that part of Saffron Walden parish included in Ashdon ward.</i> |
| AAD    | Ashdon                       | Sewards End       | 424                     | Sewards End Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
|        | <b>Ashdon</b>                |                   | <b>1594</b>             |   |
| ABA    | Broad Oak & the Hallingburys | Great Canfield    | 350                     | Great Canfield Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ABB    | Broad Oak & the Hallingburys | Great Hallingbury | 610                     | Great Hallingbury Parish Hall<br>No change proposed   |

| PD ref | Ward                         | Polling District   | Electorate<br>July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| ABC    | Broad Oak & the Hallingburys | Hatfield Broad Oak | 863                     | <p>Hatfield Broad Oak Village Hall<br/>No change proposed</p> <p>The polling district boundary will divide the parish of Hatfield Broad Oak as described below:<br/><i>A line commencing on the western boundary of the parish, north of Wall Wood, then following the road from Lodge Farm in a southerly direction towards Forest Hall to meet a footpath eastwards to join the road from Forest Hall Farm to Doodle Oak, then following the road for a short distance before going in a south-easterly direction along a footpath to a junction of the path on the western boundary of Barrington Park, then along the line of a footpath going north and then east to meet the road from Hatfield Broad Oak to Takeley south of Green Hill, then in a straight line in a north-easterly direction to the parish boundary.</i></p> <p>The Hatfield Broad Oak Village polling district will continue to consist of that part of the parish lying to the south of the boundary as defined above.</p> |
| ABD    | Broad Oak & the Hallingburys | Bush End           | 113                     | <p>The Ancient Foresters, Bush End, Takeley<br/>No change proposed</p> <p><i>Bush End polling district will consist of that part of Hatfield Broad Oak parish lying to the north of the boundary line as defined under ABC Hatfield Broad Oak above.</i></p>  |
| ABE    | Broad Oak & the Hallingburys | Little Hallingbury | 1241                    | <p>Little Hallingbury Village Hall<br/>No change proposed</p>   |
|        | <b>Broad Oak &amp; the</b>   |                    | <b>3177</b>             |   |

| PD ref | Ward                | Polling District          | Electorate<br>July 2014 | Proposals  |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|
|        | <b>Hallingburys</b> |                           |                         |  |
| ACA    | Clavering           | Arkesden                  | 290                     | Arkesden Village hall<br>No change proposed  |
| ACB    | Clavering           | Clavering                 | 1006                    | Clavering Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ACC    | Clavering           | Langley                   | 290                     | Langley Community Centre, Langley Upper Green<br>No change proposed  |
| ACD    | Clavering           | Wicken Bonhunt            | 197                     | St Margaret's Church, Wicken Bonhunt<br>No change proposed   |
|        | <b>Clavering</b>    |                           | <b>1787</b>             |  |
| ADA    | Debden & Wimbish    | Debden                    | 632                     | Debden Memorial Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ADB    | Debden & Wimbish    | Wimbish (Carver Barracks) | 525                     | The Community Hall, Carver Barracks<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district boundary will consist of that portion of Wimbish parish West of a line running from the north-east corner of Rowney Wood to a point on Thaxted Road immediately east of Myco House, then running in a generally northerly direction in a straight line immediately to the east of Parsonage Farm/Gosia's Grange and then to the ward boundary east of Tiptofts.</i> |
| ADC    | Debden & Wimbish    | Wimbish (Village)         | 484                     | Wimbish Village Hall   |

| PD ref | Ward                         | Polling District | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals  |
|--------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|--|
|        |                              |                  |                      | No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of Wimbish parish not included in the Wimbish (Carver Barracks) polling district.</i>  |
|        | <b>Debden &amp; Wimbish</b>  |                  | <b>1641</b>          |  |
| AEA    | Elsenham & Henham            | Elsenham         | 1892                 | Elsenham Memorial Hall, off Leigh Drive, Elsenham<br>No change presently proposed; an interim review might become necessary within five years depending on the scale and rate of electorate growth during that time.   |
| AEB    | Elsenham & Henham            | Henham           | 948                  | Henham Village Hall<br>No change proposed but potential development at the Fairfield site might overspill the parish boundary and require an interim review.   |
|        | <b>Elsenham &amp; Henham</b> |                  | <b>2840</b>          |  |
| AFA    | Felsted & Stebbing           | Felsted East     | 382                  | Crix Green Mission Hall, Felsted<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of that portion of Felsted parish lying to the east of a line commencing at the northern boundary of the parish at the bridleway from Braintree Road to Graunt Courts Farm and running in a generally southerly direction along the centre of the bridleway to Frenches Green at the junction of the bridleway with the road between Frenches Green and Bannister Green, then in a straight line and in a south westerly direction to the junction of the road from Cock Green to</i> |

| PD ref | Ward                                    | Polling District        | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|---|-------------------------|----------------------|---|
|        |   |                         |                      | <i>Thistley Green with the road leading to Pye's Farm and then in a straight line to the ward boundary at the point where it crosses the River Ter immediately to the east of Leez Priory.</i>                                      |
| AFB    | Felsted & Stebbing                      | Felsted West            | 1970                 | Felsted Memorial Hall, Braintree Road, Felsted<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of Felsted parish not included in Felsted East polling district as described under AFA above.</i> |
| AFC    | Felsted & Stebbing                      | Stebbing                | 1073                 | Stebbing Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
|        | <b>Felsted &amp; Stebbing</b>           |                         | <b>3425</b>          |   |
| AGA    | Flitch Green & Little Dunmow            | Flitch Green            | 1338                 | Flitch Green Community Hall, off Tanton Road, Little Dunmow<br>No change proposed   |
| AGB    | Flitch Green & Little Dunmow            | Little Dunmow           | 252                  | Community Meeting Room, Recreation Ground, off Brook Street, Little Dunmow<br>No change proposed  |
|        | <b>Flitch Green &amp; Little Dunmow</b> |                         | <b>1590</b>          |   |
| AHA    | Great Dunmow North                      | Great Dunmow North-East | 1935                 | The Dourdan Pavilion, Recreation Ground, off The Causeway, Great Dunmow   |

| PD ref    | Ward                     | Polling District              | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| AHA cont. | Great Dunmow North cont. | Great Dunmow North-East cont. |                      | <p>A change to the polling district boundary is proposed to take account of new development at Woodlands Park. Some change is needed because the existing boundary runs through the middle of a site of 351 planned houses immediately to the south of Helena Romanes School. There are a further 250 unoccupied new houses elsewhere at Woodlands Park.</p> <p>To accommodate the 600 additional houses, it is proposed to transfer 423 electors at Newton Green, Jubilee Court and Waldgrooms from Great Dunmow North-West to the North-East polling district. The polling district boundary is proposed to be realigned as described below:<br/> <i>That part of Great Dunmow North ward lying to the east of a line running from Stortford Road immediately west and then north of Newton Green, Rosemary Crescent, Downs Crescent and then Emblems, to the ward boundary west of Newton Hall</i></p> |
| AHB       | Great Dunmow North       | Great Dunmow North-West       | 1238                 | <p>Great Dunmow Primary School off Woodlands Park Drive, Great Dunmow</p> <p>Changes are proposed to the polling district boundary as described above having the immediate effect of transferring 423 electors from the North-West to the North-East polling district. This will make space for the estimated 1000+ additional electors expected to occupy the 600 further houses coming on stream at Woodlands Park. The polling district will then consist almost exclusively of electors at Woodlands Park.</p> <p>Planned and further potential development west of the bypass at Woodlands Park may require an interim review to be carried out within five years. Please note that the development at sector 4 will be located</p>  |

| PD ref | Ward                          | Polling District        | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---|
|        |                               |                         |                      | <p>almost entirely within Little Easton parish. A community governance review has already been agreed and is likely to be scheduled within the next two years.</p> <p><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of Great Dunmow North ward not included in Great Dunmow North-East above.</i></p>   |
|        | <b>Great Dunmow North</b>     |                         | <b>3173</b>          |   |
| AJA    | Great Dunmow South & Barnston | Barnston                | 748                  | Barnston Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AJB    | Great Dunmow South & Barnston | Great Dunmow South-East | 1987                 | <p>United Reformed Church, New Street, Great Dunmow<br/>No change proposed</p> <p>Agreement has been reached with the owners of the URC to resolve access problems reported at recent elections; an alternative much more satisfactory entrance will now be used.</p> <p>There is planned development for 550 residential units within the polling district and this might lead to the need for an interim review within five years.</p> <p><i>The polling district will consist of that part of Great Dunmow parish lying mainly to the south and to the east of a line running from the western ward boundary in a generally north-easterly direction, first along the A120, then along the western edge of the Lukins Mead development to the southern bypass, then for a short distance in a westerly direction along the bypass, then in a northerly direction along the eastern edge of</i></p> |

| PD ref | Ward                                     | Polling District        | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals  |
|--------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|--|
|        |  |                         |                      | <i>Springfields, Highfields, and then Standrums, then south of 34 High Street, then in a south-easterly direction along High Street to the junction with Braintree Road, then continuing along that road to the ward boundary.</i>   |
| AJC    | Great Dunmow South & Barnston            | Great Dunmow South-West | 2130                 | ET Foakes Memorial Hall, Stortford Road, Great Dunmow<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of Great Dunmow parish located within Great Dunmow &amp; Barnston ward not included in Great Dunmow South-East polling district as described above.</i> |
|        | <b>Great Dunmow South &amp; Barnston</b> |                         | <b>4865</b>          |  |
| AKA    | Hatfield Heath                           | Hatfield Heath          | 1451                 | Hatfield Heath Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| AKB    | Hatfield Heath                           | White Roding            | 270                  | White Roding Sports and Social Club<br>No change proposed  |
|        | <b>Hatfield Heath</b>                    |                         | <b>1721</b>          |  |
| ALA    | High Easter & the Rodings                | Aythorpe Roding         | 169                  | Aythorpe Roding Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ALB    | High Easter & the Rodings                | High Easter             | 613                  | High Easter Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ALC    | High Easter & the                        | High Roding             | 376                  | WI Hall, High Roding   |



| PD ref | Ward                                   | Polling District                                     | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|--|--|----------------------|---|
|        | Rodings                                |  |                      | No change proposed  |
| ALD    | High Easter & the Rodings              | Leaden Roding  | 510                  | Leaden Roding Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| ALE    | High Easter & the Rodings              | Margaret Roding                                      | 145                  | It is proposed that the Reid Rooms, Marks Hall Lane is designated as the polling place. This will replace the present position where the whole of the polling district is designated.   |
|        | <b>High Easter &amp; the Rodings</b>   |  | <b>1813</b>          |   |
| AMA    | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Chrishall  | 451                  | Chrishall Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| AMB(i) | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Duddenhoe End & Wenden Lofts (part in Elmdon parish) | 176                  | Duddenhoe End Village Hall<br>No change proposed<br><br>Note: this polling district comprises two parts as Elmdon and Wenden Lofts are separate parishes (although in the same grouped parish council) but the same polling place can be designated as separate polling stations will be used only in the event of contested parish elections. In effect, it is the same polling district.<br><br><i>The polling district will comprise the parish of Wenden Lofts together with that portion of the parish of Elmdon lying to the south of a straight line commencing on the eastern boundary of the parish at the north-western</i> |

| PD ref  | Ward                                   | Polling District   | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals  |
|---------|--|--|----------------------|--|
|         |  |  |                      | <i>point of Lee Wood and running in a westerly direction to the western boundary of the parish at the junction of the road from Elmdon village with the B1039 at Essex Hill.</i>   |
| AMB(ii) | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Duddenhoe End & Wenden Lofts (part in Wenden Lofts parish) | 63                   | Duddenhoe End Village Hall<br>No change proposed<br><br>Refer to note above for description of polling arrangements and the polling district boundary.   |
| AMC     | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Elmdon   | 278                  | Elmdon Village Hall<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of the parish of Elmdon not included in the Duddenhoe End &amp; Wenden Lofts polling district.</i>  |
| AMD     | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Great Chesterford  | 1137                 | Great Chesterford Community Centre, Recreation Ground<br>No change proposed  |
| AME(i)  | Littlebury, Chesterford & Wenden Lofts | Littlebury Green & Strethall (part in Littlebury parish)   | 208                  | St Peter's Church, Littlebury Green<br>No change proposed<br><br>Note: this polling district comprises two parts as Littlebury and Strethall are separate parishes but the same polling place can be designated as Strethall is too small to be designated separately.<br><br><i>The polling district consists of the parish of Strethall and that part of the parish of Littlebury lying to the west of a line commencing at the point where the railway line crosses the southern boundary of the parish and</i> |

| PD ref  | Ward  | Polling District  | Electorate<br>July 2014 | Proposals   |
|---------|---|---|-------------------------|---|
|         |   |   |                         | <i>running in a north westerly direction by the western extremity of Avenue Cottages and the eastern extremity of Howe Wood to the northern boundary of the parish.</i> |
| AME(ii) | Littlebury,<br>Chesterford<br>& Wenden Lofts              | Littlebury Green &<br>Strethall (part in<br>Strethall parish) | 19                      | St Peter's Church, Littlebury Green<br>No change proposed<br><br>See note above for description of polling arrangements and polling district boundary.                  |
| AMF     | Littlebury,<br>Chesterford<br>& Wenden Lofts              | Littlebury Village  | 500                     | Littlebury Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AMG     | Littlebury,<br>Chesterford<br>& Wenden Lofts              | Little Chesterford  | 167                     | Little Chesterford Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AMH     | Littlebury,<br>Chesterford<br>& Wenden Lofts              | Wendens Ambo  | 339                     | Wendens Ambo Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
|         | <b>Littlebury,<br/>Chesterford &amp;<br/>Wenden Lofts</b> |   | <b>3338</b>             |   |
| ANA     | Newport   | Newport   | 1912                    | Newport Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| ANB     | Newport   | Quendon &   | 484                     | Quendon and Rickling Village Hall   |

| PD ref    | Ward                           | Polling District   | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals  |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|
|           |                                | Rickling           |                      | No change proposed   |
| ANC       | Newport                        | Widdington         | 394                  | Widdington Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
|           | <b>Newport</b>                 |                    | <b>2790</b>          |  |
| AOA       | Saffron Walden<br>Audley       | Audley North       | 1254                 | Committee Room, Town Hall, Saffron Walden (rear entrance off Butcher Row)<br><br>A change to the polling district boundary is proposed to take account of alterations to the ward boundary, provide for a more strongly defined polling district boundary and achieve a better balance between the number of electors registered in each part; the change will involve the transfer of 120 electors from Audley South.<br><br><i>To achieve a better defined boundary, it is proposed to realign the boundary to run from the ward boundary at the junction with South Road westwards along the centre of Station Road to the junction of Debden Road, then northwards along the centre of Debden Road to the junction with London Road and High Street, then continuing in a generally north-westerly direction to the east of Beck Road, and the north of Saxon Way, and then following the line of the Slade to the ward boundary.</i><br><br>Audley North will then comprise that part of Audley ward lying to the North of that line. |
| AOA cont. | Saffron Walden<br>Audley cont. | Audley North cont. |                      |  |
| AOB       | Saffron Walden<br>Audley       | Audley South       | 2305                 | A decision is required to designate a polling place for the Audley South polling district; the options presented for consideration are:<br>(a) The Assembly Hall at the Friends School, Mount Pleasant Road,   |

| PD ref       | Ward                             | Polling District           | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---|
|              |                                  |                            |                      | <p>Saffron Walden (the existing polling place), or<br/>(b) The Gymnasium at the County High School, Audley End Road (off Copperfields), Saffron Walden</p> <p>Please see the attached appendix B for analysis of the two locations. A change to the polling district boundary is proposed having the effect of transferring 120 electors to Audley North (see revised boundary definition under AOA Audley North above). Audley South will comprise that part of Audley ward lying to the south of the defined boundary.</p>  |
|              | <b>Saffron Walden<br/>Audley</b> |                            | <b>3559</b>          |   |
| APA          | Saffron Walden<br>Castle         | Castle South-East          | 1069                 | <p>The Sports Hall at Dame Johane Bradbury School, Ashdon Road</p> <p>A minor alteration is proposed to the alignment of the polling district boundary to reflect the revised ward boundary. The boundary description will be adjusted to read as follows:<br/><i>The polling district boundary will run northwards from the ward boundary on Ashdon Road from a point to the west of No. 2 Ashdon Road and will then continue along the rear boundaries of properties fronting the western side of Highfields to the junction with Sheds Lane, then along the rear boundaries of 10-16 Sheds Lane (evens), then continuing along the centre of Sheds Lane to bridleway 1 to byway 3 at Butlers Lane and then to the ward boundary.</i></p> <p>Castle South-East will consist of everything to the east of that line and Castle South-West will comprise the remainder of the ward.</p> |
| APA<br>cont. | Saffron Walden<br>Castle cont.   | Castle South-East<br>cont. |                      |   |
| APB          | Saffron Walden                   | Castle South-West          | 1920                 | The School Hall at St Mary's Primary School, Castle Street, Saffron   |

| PD ref | Ward                             | Polling District | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals  |
|--------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|--|
|        | Castle                           |                  |                      | Walden<br>A minor change is proposed to realign the polling district boundary to take account of the revised ward boundary (see APA above).  |
|        | <b>Saffron Walden<br/>Castle</b> |                  | <b>2989</b>          |  |
| AQA    | Saffron Walden<br>Shire          | Shire North      | 2944                 | <p>The School Hall at the R A Butler Junior School, South Road, Saffron Walden</p> <p>A change is proposed to the polling district boundary to take account of approved development on the Manor Oak site and, depending on the outcome of the planning appeal, potential development of the Kier Homes site. This will involve the transfer from Shire South of 36 electors at Thaxted Road.</p> <p>The polling boundary description will now read as follows:</p> <p><i>That part of Shire ward to the north of a line running eastwards from the ward boundary at the junction of Mount Pleasant Road with Debden Road along the centre of Mount Pleasant Road and then Peaslands Road to the junction of that road with Thaxted Road, and then following the centre of Thaxted Road south easterly to the ward boundary.</i></p> <p>The allocation of nearly 3,000 electors at this location is close to the upper limit of electors that should be allocated to a single polling location. At present, it is not possible to identify a suitable division of the existing polling district, or an additional polling place, to accommodate new and potential development so that an interim review may be required within a five year period.</p> |

| PD ref | Ward                        | Polling District | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|
| AQB    | Saffron Walden Shire        | Shire South      | 2560                 | <p>A decision is required to designate a polling place for Shire South; the options presented for consideration are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The School Hall at the Katherine Semar Junior School, Ross Close, Saffron Walden, or</li> <li>(b) Golden Acre Community Centre, Long Horse Croft, Saffron Walden (the existing polling place)</li> </ul> <p>Please see appendix B for analysis of the two locations.</p> <p>A minor change is proposed to redefine the polling district boundary as described in the text relating to Shire North above. This will have the effect of transferring 36 electors at Thaxted Road to Shire North.</p> <p>Shire South will consist of that part of the ward located to the south of the boundary line defined in AQA Shire North above.</p> |
|        | <b>Saffron Walden Shire</b> |                  | <b>5468</b>          |   |
| ARA    | Stansted North              | Stansted East    | 1664                 | <p>A change is being proposed to designate the Peter Kirk Centre, St John's Road, Stansted as the polling place for the renamed Stansted East polling district (formerly known as Stansted North-East), in place of the Youth Centre, Lower Street, Stansted.</p> <p>It is proposed to redefine the polling district boundary to take account of the revised ward to read as described overleaf:<br/> <i>That part of Stansted North ward east of a line following the centre of Silver Street and then Cambridge Road from the southern to the northern ward boundary.</i></p>   |

| PD ref | Ward                        | Polling District | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---|
| ARB    | Stansted North              | Stansted West    | 1733                 | <p>Bentfield Primary School, Rainsford Road, Stansted<br/>A change is proposed to accommodate the revised ward boundary (see text under Stansted East above for explanation).</p> <p>The proposed redefinition of the polling district boundary to follow the centre of Silver Street will result in the transfer of 364 electors to Stansted North-West, now proposed to be renamed as Stansted West.</p> <p>Stansted West will consist of that part of the ward lying to the west of the boundary line defined under ARA Stansted North above.</p>  |
|        | <b>Stansted North</b>       |                  | <b>3397</b>          |   |
| ASA    | Stansted South & Birchanger | Birchanger       | 748                  | <p>St Mary's Church Hall, 207 Birchanger Lane, Birchanger<br/>No change proposed</p>  |
| ASB    | Stansted South & Birchanger | Stansted South   | 2594                 | <p>A change is proposed to designate the School Hall at St Mary's C of E Primary School, Hampton Road, Stansted as the polling place for the redefined polling district, in place of the Mountfitchet Romeera Centre, Forest Hall Road, Stansted.</p> <p>It is proposed to merge the remainder of the old South-East and South-West polling districts, together with the Foresthall Park polling district area transferred from Birchanger to Stansted parish, into a new enlarged Stansted South polling district. A total of 97 electors from the Old Bell Close area are added from what remained of the South-West district west of the railway line and that polling district will cease to exist. The separate Foresthall Park polling district will also cease to exist. The polling district will then comprise the whole of that part of Stansted Parish included within Stansted South &amp; Birchanger ward.</p> |



| PD ref    | Ward                                   | Polling District     | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|-----------|--|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| ASB cont. | Stansted South & Birchanger cont.      | Stansted South cont. |                      | The polling district is close to the recommended upper limit of electors allocated to a single polling district. If additional development takes place within the polling district an interim review may be required within the next five years. For the present, there is no need to consider splitting the Stansted South area into separate polling districts. |
|           | <b>Stansted South &amp; Birchanger</b> |                      | <b>3342</b>          |   |
| ATA       | Stort Valley                           | Berden               | 380                  | Berden Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| ATB       | Stort Valley                           | Farnham              | 326                  | Farnham Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| ATC       | Stort Valley                           | Manuden              | 513                  | A change is proposed to designate the new Manuden Village Community Centre as the polling place instead of the old village hall which is no longer in use. The new centre is less central but does provide convenient and fully accessible facilities for electors. It has already been used at one election.   |
| ATD       | Stort Valley                           | Ugley                | 370                  | Ugley Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
|           | <b>Stort Valley</b>                    |                      | <b>1589</b>          |   |

| PD ref  | Ward    | Polling District                                       | Electorate<br>July 2014 | Proposals  |
|---------|---------|--|-------------------------|--|
| AUA(i)  | Takeley | Broxted & Chickney<br>(part in the parish of Broxted)  | 425                     | Broxted Village Hall<br>A minor change is proposed to reintegrate the small parish of Chickney into the Broxted polling district. This is required because Chickney has been transferred from Elsenham and Henham ward and can no longer be attached to Henham for polling purposes. The revised polling district will comprise two parts as Broxted and Chickney are separate parishes.   |
| AUA(ii) | Takeley | Broxted & Chickney<br>(part in the parish of Chickney) | 32                      | Broxted Village Hall<br>Please note the minor change proposed to restore the polling link between Broxted and Chickney as the latter parish has been transferred from Elsenham & Henham ward. Chickney is too small to form a polling unit on its own.   |
| AUB     | Takeley | Little Canfield  | 718                     | Little Canfield Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AUC     | Takeley | Mole Hill Green  | 94                      | Mole Hill Green Village Hall<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district consists of that part of the parish of Takeley lying to the east and north of a line commencing on the north-western boundary of the parish at a point due north of the passenger terminal at Stansted Airport, and running in a southerly direction to a point on the road from Coopers End to Takeley village north of Bridgefoot Cottages, then in a north-easterly direction to the parish boundary at the point where it is crossed by the byway known as Cobbs Lane.</i> |
| AUD     | Takeley | Takeley Priors Green                                   | 1245                    | The Priors Green Community Centre, Bennet Canfield, Little Canfield CM6 1YE (Takeley parish)   |

| PD ref    | Ward                  | Polling District                  | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| AUD cont. | Takeley cont.         | Takeley Priors Green cont.        |                      | No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district boundary consists of that part of Takeley parish lying to the east of a straight line running from the point where the polling district boundary with Mole Hill Green is intersected by the road leading from Mole Hill Green to Bambers Green and then running in a roughly southerly direction immediately to the west of Warish Hall and Smiths Green to the centre of Dunmow Road, then in an easterly direction to the Junction with Canfield Road, then following the centre of that road to the Parish boundary.</i> |
| AUE       | Takeley               | Takeley Village                   | 1925                 | The Silver Jubilee Hall, Brewers End, Takeley<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district will consist of the remainder of Takeley parish not included in either the Mole Hill Green or Takeley Priors Green polling district.</i>   |
|           | <b>Takeley</b>        |                                   | <b>4439</b>          |   |
| AVA       | Thaxted & the Eastons | Duton Hill                        | 306                  | The Three Horseshoes Public House, Duton Hill<br>No change proposed<br><br><i>The polling district consists of that part of the parish of Great Easton included in the Duton Hill parish ward as described in the District of Uttlesford (Electoral Changes) Order 2001.</i>  |
| AVB(i)    | Thaxted & the Eastons | Great Easton & Tilty (part in the | 419                  | Great Easton Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |

| PD ref       | Ward                             | Polling District   | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------|---|
| AVB(i) cont. | Thaxted & the Eastons cont.      | parish of Great Easton)<br><br>Great Easton & Tilty (part in the parish of Great Easton) cont. |                      | Note: this polling district comprises two parts as Great Easton and Tilty are separate parishes, joined together in a grouped parish council.<br><br><i>The polling district comprises the parish of Tilty together with the remainder of the parish of Great Easton not included in the Duton Hill polling district.</i> |
| AVB(ii)      | Thaxted & the Eastons            | Great Easton & Tilty (part in the parish of Tilty)   | 77                   | Great Easton Village Hall<br>No change proposed<br><br>See above for note of polling district arrangements and the polling district boundary.   |
| AVC          | Thaxted & the Eastons            | Lindsell   | 212                  | Lindsell Village Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AVD          | Thaxted & the Eastons            | Little Easton  | 340                  | Little Easton Memorial Hall<br>No change proposed   |
| AVE          | Thaxted & the Eastons            | Thaxted  | 2271                 | Bolford Street Hall, Bolford Street, Thaxted<br>No change proposed  |
|              | <b>Thaxted &amp; the Eastons</b> |  | <b>3625</b>          |   |
| AWA(i)       | The Sampfords                    | Great & Little   | 459                  | Baptist Church Hall, Great Sampford   |

| PD ref  | Ward   | Polling District  | Electorate July 2014 | Proposals   |
|---------|--|---|----------------------|---|
|         |  | Sampford (part in the parish of Great Sampford)                 |                      | No change proposed<br><br>Note: Great and Little Sampford are separate parishes of the same grouped parish council; separate polling stations would be required only in the event of a contested parish poll. |
| AWA(ii) | The Sampfords  | Great & Little Sampford (part in the parish of Little Sampford) | 208                  | Baptist Church Hall, Great Sampford<br>No change proposed<br><br>Please see note above about polling arrangements.  |
| AWB     | The Sampfords  | Hempstead   | 339                  | Hempstead Village Hall<br>No change proposed  |
| AWC     | The Sampfords  | Little Bardfield  | 223                  | Little Bardfield Cricket Pavilion<br>No change proposed   |
| AWD     | The Sampfords  | Radwinter   | 505                  | Radwinter Parish Hall<br>No change proposed   |
|         | <b>The Sampfords</b>                                     |   | <b>1734</b>          |   |
|         | <b>Total electorate for Uttlesford as at 1 July 2014</b> |   | <b>63896</b>         |   |

## UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW 2014

### **Criteria used in assessing polling buildings**

#### *Scoring*

An informal scoring system for the criteria on which each building was assessed was used, as follows:

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Good
- 3 = Adequate
- 2 = Below average
- 1 = Poor

Each building was assessed against ten different criteria relating to factors including location, availability over a five year period, parking provision, suitability of external and internal access to the building, internal space dimensions, and general facilities for polling staff and for electors.

The outcomes of the assessments are summarised in the attached appendix C. Marks were given from 5 (Excellent) to 1 (Poor) for the criteria listed on the attached example score sheet. The aggregate score for each building is shown in this report.

#### *Footfall*

There is likely to be a high turnout at the May 2015 elections, raising the prospect of queues building up, and confusion if people are queuing in the wrong line, or waiting too long. Therefore the assessment of buildings should be considered against a realistic context based on projected footfall of voters on polling day. In order to gain an idea of the numbers of voting likely to be using a particular polling station, the following criteria were taken into account.

In polling districts where electorate numbers are near the upper level of what is considered to be the practical maximum of 3000 voters for a polling district, sufficient space, parking and ease of access are critical. To provide a realistic context in terms of voters attending a polling station on 7 May 2015, a projected turnout of 75% is considered reasonable. On that basis, the likely footfall of electors at a polling station is calculated as follows:

3,000 electors less 15% postal voters (about average) = 1900 electors voting in person, or an average of around 125 voters per hour. At peak periods, this figure could translate into 250 voters per hour.

At polling stations where the electorate numbers are at this level (for example, Shire North, using R A Butler School), sufficient internal space should be allowed for two (or possibly three) stations to be located, with clear space between all of the voting stations and the screens to be set up. This is against the context that each elector will be expected to mark three ballot papers, one with a choice of three and one with a choice of up to seven.

#### *Photos*

Photographs will be available electronically at the meeting where they might illustrate a particular advantage or disadvantage of a building, usually in comparison to another possible polling station.

## APPENDIX B – SITE VISITS

List of site visits undertaken:

|    |   |                                  |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1  | Community Meeting Room, off Brook St                  | Little Dunmow                    |
| 2  | United Reformed Church, New Street                    | Great Dunmow South East          |
| 3  | The Reid Rooms, Marks Hall Lane                       | Margaret Roding                  |
| 4  | The Assembly Hall, The Friends' School                | Saffron Walden Audley South      |
| 5  | The Gymnasium, The County High School                 | Saffron Walden Audley South      |
| 6  | Staff Room Meeting Room, Council Offices, London Road | Saffron Walden Audley South      |
| 7  | Parish Room, St Mary's Church                         | Saffron Walden Castle South West |
| 8  | R A Butler School                                     | Saffron Walden Shire North       |
| 9  | Katherine Semar School                                | Saffron Walden Shire South       |
| 10 | Golden Acre Community Centre                          | Saffron Walden Shire South       |
| 11 | Youth Centre, Lower Street                            | Stansted East                    |
| 12 | Peter Kirk Centre, St John's Road                     | Stansted East                    |
| 13 | St Mary's C of E Primary School, Hampton Road         | Stansted South                   |
| 14 | Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre                   | Stansted South                   |
| 15 | Bolford Street Hall                                   | Thaxted                          |
| 16 | Church Hall, Margaret Street                          | Thaxted                          |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Little Dunmow    | <b>Community Meeting Room, off Brook Street, Little Dunmow</b> |  |
|                  | General Commentary   | <p>The Community Meeting Room was designated in place of the Flitch of Bacon Public House in 2011 and has been used for all subsequent elections. Concerns were raised about the use of the Flitch of Bacon (although it is more central to the village) because the polling station is located in part of the licensed bar area which jeopardises the protection of electors' statutory right to vote in secret. The community hall is located part of the way along an unlit lane outside the village perimeter but there seems no reasonable alternative at present. The Flitch of Bacon is in the process of being sold and the future of the building is unclear.</p> |
|                  | Site Visit Report  | <p>The community meeting room is considered to be generally of a high enough standard to be designated for polling use. There is adequate parking provision, access to the building is provided to an acceptable standard and the facilities internally are reasonable. Although the internal space is quite small at 5.25m x 3.2m, this is sufficient to accommodate one polling station for the 250 electors on the register.</p>  |
|                  | <b>Score awarded</b>   | 41   |
|                  | <b>Recommendation</b>  | Retain the Community Meeting Room as the designated polling place for Little Dunmow.   |



**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District        | Building(s) assessed  | COMMENTS  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Great Dunmow South East | <p><b>United Reformed Church Hall, New Street, Great Dunmow</b></p> |   |
|                         | <p><b>General Commentary</b></p>                                    | <p>Critical comments have been made by at least one elector about the access arrangements at the URC. This was a wheelchair bound elector who experienced some problems in gaining access from the car park side of the building, via a permanent concrete ramp, and two quite narrow doorways. In all other respects, the use of the URC seems acceptable.</p>   |
|                         | <p>Site visit report</p>  | <p>The URC is located down a narrow one way street at New Street. It is a central location within Great Dunmow but is not central in terms of the polling district itself. In particular, the location is quite remote from the residential developments at and around Ongar Road. The main hall is well proportioned at 14m x 7.3m and general facilities are good. Agreement has now been reached with the church authorities to use an alternative entrance at the northern end of the URC site situated close to the internal room used for polling. This arrangement is entirely acceptable.</p> |
|                         | <p>Score awarded</p>  | <p>48 (40 if the original entrance is used).</p>  |
|                         | <p>Recommendation</p>   | <p>Continue to designate the URC but only on the basis that the northern entrance to the building is used.</p>  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed                                    | COMMENTS  |
|------------------|---|---|
| Margaret Roding  | <b>The Reid Rooms, Marks Hall Lane, Margaret Roding</b> |   |
|                  | General commentary                                      | <p>The Reid Rooms at Marks Hall Lane, Margaret Roding were first designated for polling use several years ago and have proved generally satisfactory. Problems have occasionally arisen because the venue is used for weddings, often booked well in advance of the date, and is consequently unavailable for election use. The parish church was used on one occasion but is not considered a satisfactory venue. As a result of the difficulties experienced in securing exclusive use of the venue, the existing scheme adopted in 2011 designated the entire polling district as the polling place. This is an unsatisfactory outcome and a specified venue must now be designated.</p> |
|                  | Site visit report                                       | <p>The visit made on 24 September assessed the venue as being entirely satisfactory for use as a polling venue with a score of 45 awarded. The owner Mr Ritchie has confirmed to me that he will make the function room available for the 2015 elections regardless of any other bookings. The difficulty is in securing certainty of continued use beyond May 2015. However, in the absence of any suitable alternative building it is proposed that the Reid Rooms are designated as part of the adopted scheme.</p>  |
|                  | Score awarded   | 45  |
|                  | <b>Recommendation</b>                                   | To designate The Reid Rooms, Marks Hall Lane, Margaret Roding as the polling place for Margaret Roding.   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District               | Building(s) assessed  | COMMENTS  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Saffron Walden<br>Audley South | <b>Friends' School,<br/>Mount Pleasant Road,<br/>Saffron Walden</b> |   |
|                                | General commentary  | <p>The Friends' School has been designated and used as a polling venue for many years. There are two difficulties with the use of this venue for polling in Audley South. First, the school site is located entirely outside the polling district area. It is located within the adjoining Shire South polling district. This problem is aggravated by the ward boundary changes as a block of streets opposite the school site has been moved into Shire ward. What do the rules say? They state that the polling place must be an area in the polling district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district. The most important consideration is to ensure that any polling stations provided are within easy reach of electors from across the polling district. The second problem is that the Assembly Hall has been unavailable on at least three recent occasions. On two occasions a mobile unit located within the school car park has been used instead and on one occasion, at very short notice, the music room was allocated. The Business Manager has told me that the Assembly Hall is available for hire on 7 May 2015 and that any booking made would be honoured. The difficulty is in securing the availability of the Assembly Hall over a full five year period. Although state funded schools are available as of right for use by the returning officer, this stipulation does not apply to private schools so there is no guarantee beyond 2015 that the Assembly Hall would be available.</p> |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Site visit report     | <p>The Assembly Hall is considered to be fully suitable for election use, in terms of all of the assessment criteria used. Crucially, in planning to accommodate nearly 2,500 electors at the combined Parliamentary/local elections in May 2015, internal space dimensions of at least 10 x 10m is considered to be the minimum requirement. This is to be able to accommodate two polling stations with enough space to organise the effective throughput of electors. This condition is met in respect of the Assembly Hall. Access and parking provision is also satisfactory.</p> <p>The Sports Hall has been assessed as a possible alternative. This location could be used in practice only by utilising the side entrance as the main entrance is accessed by a number of steep steps. The side entrance is an emergency exit door and can be used only by propping open the door which opens directly into the main hall area. On a wet or windy day, the sports hall would not be a practical option.</p> <p>The conclusion is that the Sports Hall could be used only as a last option, even though the internal space available is more than sufficient.</p> |
| Score awarded         | 43 for the Assembly Hall; 41 for the Sports Hall  |
| <b>Recommendation</b> | If the Friends' School site is designated, then use of the Assembly Hall must be specified in the scheme. However, this would not secure use of the designated location beyond 2015. Conclusion: consider use of the County High School instead.  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District            | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS  |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Saffron Walden Audley South | <p><b>Gymnasium at the County High School, Audley End Road (accessed via Copperfields), Saffron Walden</b></p> |   |
|                             | <p>General commentary</p>  | <p>The County High School site is considered to offer the only realistic alternative to the Friends' School site for polling in the Audley South area. As stated elsewhere, the returning officer has the right to use any school maintained out of monies allocated by Parliament, including academies and free schools. At the outset, it is only fair to draw members' attention to the school's position which is broadly unsympathetic to the location of polling anywhere on the CHS site (see separate pack of representations). This is based on the school's understandable reluctance to close on polling day and the comment that, for reasons of safeguarding, all visitors to the site must sign in and out at school reception. I have made it clear to the Head that signing in and out is not an option in respect of voters attending a polling station.</p> <p>Having visited the site, it must be conceded that use of any part of the main school site would be difficult, whether or not the school chose to close on the day. However, the use of the gymnasium as part of the sports hall complex would be entirely feasible (see comments below).</p> |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Site visit report     | <p>It was decided to investigate the CHS site for possible polling use initially because of the lack of other suitable locations in Audley South and because of the problems encountered at the Friends' School. The conclusion of the site inspection is that the gymnasium is a realistic option for polling use. The gym is part of the sports hall complex located east of the main school site and accessed via the entrance to Copperfields, with its own dedicated parking area. The distance from the London Road office to the car park is less than ½ a mile.</p> <p>Access to the building is very good and the entrance to the gym itself is a short distance from the main ground floor entrance along a wide corridor. In the event that the CHS remains open, it would be quite easy to isolate electors from the other activities taking place at the school by directing electors to the lower car park and the sports hall entrance. Good signage would be required. The internal dimensions of the gym are 18 x 10m which is more than sufficient.</p> <p>The CHS site, even at the lower end, is not ideal in terms of voter accessibility as it is located some distance from the main centres of population in Audley South. Having said that, the travel distance from most parts of the polling district area is not much greater than the travel distance to the Friends' School site.</p> |
| Score awarded         | 44  |
| <b>Recommendation</b> | Consider seriously the option of designating the Gymnasium at the County High School as the polling place for Audley South instead of the Friends' School   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District               | Building(s) assessed  | COMMENTS  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Saffron Walden<br>Audley South | <b>Staff Room at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden</b> |   |
|                                | General commentary  | The Staff Room was used as a polling location for Audley South a number of years ago. It proved difficult to accommodate two polling stations as the available space is very cramped. It is not possible to identify an alternative location for polling on the London Road site. The use of the civic suite area would not be satisfactory as it is located on the first floor accessed by a flight of stairs (even though a lift is available). |
|                                | Site visit report   | There is ample parking on a normal polling day as many staff members are engaged on polling duty. The access to the staff room is generally good. However, the internal space dimensions of the room (two separate but linked restricted spaces of approximately 6 x 4.5m), and the presence of internal pillars, make it unsuitable for use as a double polling station for nearly 2,500 electors.   |
|                                | Score awarded   | 41 but see comments above   |
|                                | <b>Recommendation</b>   | That the Council Offices site is not considered for designation as a polling place  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District                 | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS  |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Saffron Walden Castle South West | <b>St Mary's Parish Room, Saffron Walden</b>                                     |   |
|                                  | General commentary   | <p>The Parish Room was formerly used as the polling location for the entire Castle ward. It was changed when the ward boundary was altered in 2003. This was because the location was no longer in the ward but there were also problems caused by the small available space and the lack of parking provision.</p> <p>The use of the Parish Room has been re-investigated at the request of the governors at the existing location of St Mary's Primary School in Church Street because the school is unwilling to continue to close on polling days.</p> <p>The school hall at St Mary's is entirely suitable for polling use and the reality of that is to enforce closure when polling takes place. Using an alternative part of the building to keep the school open has been explored and is not considered to be a realistic option.</p> |
|                                  | <b>Site visit report</b>   | <p>The internal space dimensions in the Parish Room measures 12.5m x 6.5m. That is too small a space to accommodate nearly 2,000 electors in two polling stations. Allied to that is the total lack of parking provision, except for one disabled bay.</p> <p>The building is suitable in most other respects including access and in terms of the facilities provided. However, although the location is now included within the polling district, it is not central to the population it would serve.</p>   |
|                                  | Score awarded  | 36  |
| <b>Recommendation</b>            | Retain polling at St Mary's School (main school hall) and designate accordingly. |   |



**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District           | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Saffron Walden Shire North | <p><b>Main School Hall at the R A Butler Junior School, South Road, Saffron Walden</b></p> |  |
|                            | <p>General commentary</p>  | <p>The RA Butler Junior School has been designated for use as the polling place for the Shire North polling district since 2011 in replacement for the Common Room at Four Acres. The reason for the change made in 2011 was that electorate growth in Shire North made it likely that two polling stations would become necessary at future elections. The common room was not considered suitable to site two polling stations.</p> <p>The Junior School is located on the western boundary of the polling district. It is reasonably central to the population it serves and seems to be the only building within the polling district that could be designated for polling use.</p> <p>The electorate has continued to grow and this trend has been accelerated by changes to the ward boundary coming into effect in May 2015. The electorate of close to 3,000 is at the absolute upper range of electors that can be accommodated in a single polling location.</p> <p>Future residential development at the Manor Oak site and potentially elsewhere in the polling district area means that the Shire ward will need to be further sub-divided in the near future. At the present time, no suitable polling location is available to enable such a change so it seems likely an interim review will be required within a five year time frame.</p> <p>While the school is considered a suitable location, the use of the PPA room which has restricted internal space is inadequate to locate two busy polling stations. The use of this room is advantageous as it enables the school to remain open during polling. The only possible option to provide a suitable and adequate facility in May 2015 is to designate the school hall as the polling place. Unfortunately this will require closure of the school.</p> |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Site Visit Report     | <p>The RA Butler Junior School is located on the extreme western boundary of the polling district at South Road. Ward boundary changes have meant that the electorate has grown significantly with the addition to the polling district area of two separate blocks of streets south of Ashdon Road and west of South Road. It must be said that the school is not ideally located in terms of much of the population it is serving.</p> <p>The internal space dimensions of the PPA room measure 7m x 7m. The equivalent measurement of the main school hall is 16m x 10.5m. Retaining use of the school without designating the school hall as the polling place would not work in terms of dealing with almost 3,000 electors. This solution seems the only realistic option for the revised polling scheme.</p> <p>Access to the hall is satisfactory. The path from South Road is on a slope but is well surfaced with no obstructions. If the school remains open provision will be made to set aside an agreed number of parking bays for use by electors.</p> <p>There are security issues on the school site whether or not the school remains open. The school's governing body will discuss closure at a future meeting but will do so only unwillingly. However, the reality of designating use of the school hall for polling is that the school would be unable to remain open.</p> |
| Score awarded         | 48 (37 for the PPA room)  |
| <b>Recommendation</b> | Continue to designate the RA Butler Junior School but specify the use of the school hall as the polling place   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District           | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Saffron Walden Shire South | <p><b>The School Hall at the Katherine Semar Junior School, Ross Close, Saffron Walden</b></p> |  |
|                            | <p>General commentary</p>  | <p>The school is located in Ross Close, opposite Golden Acre Community Hall which is the existing polling location for Shire South (see separate report). It is located towards the southern end of the housing estate but would be entirely convenient and accessible for the majority of electors.</p> <p>It was considered appropriate to investigate the possible use of the school instead of the community centre for the reasons explained in the separate report. In simple terms, the layout of the main school hall is considered to be better for election use in terms of the available internal space dimensions.</p> <p>The head teacher has confirmed that she will be able to work around election activities if the school is selected and the governors are not opposed to the use of the school as a polling location. It is understood that the main hall is not used for meals or regular classroom based activities so it is entirely feasible the school can remain open on polling days.</p> |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Site visit report     | <p>The junior school is located next to the infant school in Ross Close to the south of the Fairview estate in which the majority of electors in the polling district live.</p> <p>The school hall is located close to the car parking area of the school which provides direct access to the hall itself, so there is no need to access the main school building. By arrangement with the school, at least six parking bays can be reserved for use by electors.</p> <p>The hall is accessed by an external entrance with sufficient width to accommodate a standard wheelchair. If needed, double doors are available via the school reception area. Foot access to the hall area is good via a gate from Ross Close.</p> <p>The internal dimension of 12m x 9.4m makes the hall ideal to set up the two polling stations that would be needed to accommodate 2,500 electors. The layout of the hall makes it a better option than the community hall opposite.</p> |
| Score awarded         | 50  |
| <b>Recommendation</b> | Consider designating the main hall at the school instead of Golden Acre.  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District           | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Saffron Walden Shire South | <p><b>Golden Acre Community Centre, Long Horse Croft, Saffron Walden</b></p> |  |
|                            | <p>General commentary</p>  | <p>Golden Acre Community Centre has been used as the designated polling place for Shire South for many years. At one time, Shire ward was divided into separate east/ west polling districts rather than the existing north/south arrangement. At that time, the Community Centre and the junior school over the road (see separate report) were both used for polling. When the whole of the Fairview estate was combined into a single polling district, the Community Centre was selected as the preferred polling venue.</p> <p>Both venues are now under consideration as the polling venue for the slightly revised Shire South area consisting of in the region of 2,500 electors. This number of electors is in the upper range of voters that can be reasonably accommodated at a single polling location. Enough space must be provided for the location of two polling stations.</p>  |
|                            | <p>Site visit report</p>   | <p>The Community Centre is owned by the Town Council. It is located in Long Horse Croft just off Ross Close to the south of the Fairview housing estate but is quite central and convenient for the majority of electors in the polling district area.</p> <p>The building is well appointed with its own dedicated car parking area of some 20 bays. It is accessed via a set of outer doors sufficiently wide for wheelchair access and there is an inner lobby area giving access to a main hall measuring 14.6m x 7.1m. Facilities are generally very good but setting up the required two polling stations is difficult given the layout of the available internal working space.</p> <p>Ideally, a wider depth of internal space would be preferred to enable the smooth operation of two polling stations allowing for the more efficient throughput of electors. Depth of working space inside the entrance doorway is a further consideration in the event of queues forming (entirely possible during busy periods with three ballot papers being issued).</p> |
|                            | <p>Score awarded</p>   | <p>48</p>  |
|                            | <p><b>Recommendation</b></p>   | <p>Consider designating the Katherine Semar Junior School instead for this polling district (refer to separate report).</p>  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed   | COMMENTS   |
|------------------|--|--|
| Stansted East    | <p><b>Youth Centre, Lower Street, Stansted</b></p> <p>General commentary</p> | <p>The size of electorate in the revised Stansted East polling district (formerly Stansted North-East) has expanded considerably as a result of ward boundary changes. Part of the area transferred to the North ward includes a large block of electors previously allocated to the Stansted South-West polling area, for which the polling place was the Peter Kirk Centre, although this building is located in the former North ward area.</p> <p>The designation of the polling place for the East polling district area (everything in the North ward lying to the east of Cambridge Road and Silver Street will come down to a straight choice between the Peter Kirk Centre and the Youth Centre. The latter building has been used for very many years as a polling venue for electors located variously in all parts of Stansted. An assessment of the building is included in the section below.</p>  |
|                  | <p>Site visit report and score; officers' comments</p>                       | <p>The Youth Centre is located at the end of Lower Street close to where Gall End Lane begins. It is located at the eastern edge of the densely populated area of the Stansted East polling district, but is reasonably central and is a convenient location for the majority of electors.</p> <p>The main difficulties with the Youth Centre lie in the lack of a suitable entrance at the front of the building and the relatively small internal space available to accommodate the required two polling stations. There are three separate entrances to the room where the polling stations are located. Two of these are assessed as being poor as they are narrow entrances, accessed via a set of external steps in each case. As such they are unsuitable for wheelchair access. The third entrance is the one located furthest away from the car park and the entrance gate used by pedestrians. This is the one used by voters as it provides for nearly level access to the building. It is wide enough to allow for wheelchair access but there is a small internal step to negotiate.</p> <p>The internal space is 12.5m x 6m and as such is really too constricted to allow for the effective setting up of two freestanding stations.</p> <p>Car parking and other facilities are generally good.</p> |
|                  | <p>Score awarded:</p>  | <p>36</p>  |
|                  | <p><b>Recommendation</b></p>   | <p>Designate the Peter Kirk Centre as the polling place for Stansted East.</p>   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed                               | COMMENTS   |
|------------------|--|--|
|                  |  |  |
| Stansted East    | <b>Peter Kirk Centre, St John's Road, Stansted</b> |  |
|                  | General commentary                                 | Please refer to the comments listed under the general commentary section of the building assessment for the Youth Centre. In effect there is a straight choice between the Peter Kirk Centre and that building to be designated as the polling place for Stansted East. The Peter Kirk Centre is presently the designated building for Stansted South-West.  |
|                  | Site visit report                                  | <p>The Peter Kirk Centre is located in a central position in relation to the population being served. There are nearly 1,700 electors and so there must be suitable access provision and sufficient space to provide for two separate polling stations.</p> <p>The building is located off the unmade road at St John's Road and is a part of the complex of buildings forming the adult learning centre. It can be accessed on foot from either St John's Road or Chapel Hill. There are at least 12 parking spaces available for use and the entrance used is a short distance from the car park.</p> <p>The doorway width of the main entrance is 1.74m leading to a small lobby area and a further door 1.38m wide. The access and entrance arrangements are entirely suitable for polling use.</p> <p>There is an internal space of 10.7m x 11m and this is sufficient to enable two polling stations to be situated allowing for the efficient throughput of voters. Other facilities at the Centre are generally good.</p> <p>Although the location of the building is not ideal it merits a satisfactory rating on most measures and is considered a better option for voters than the alternative of using the Youth Centre</p> |
|                  | Score awarded                                      | 47   |
|                  | <b>Recommendation</b>                              | Designate the Peter Kirk Centre as the polling place for Stansted East.  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed  | COMMENTS  |
|------------------|---|---|
| Stansted South   | <p><b>St Mary's C of E Primary School, Hampton Road, Stansted</b></p> <p>General commentary</p> | <p>The proposed polling district of Stansted South merges together the whole of the Foresthall Park estate formerly divided between Stansted South and Birchanger wards, and a remnant of electors remaining in the now to be abolished Stansted South-West polling district. It therefore incorporates the whole of the Mountfitchet Road estate.</p> <p>It is now being recommended that the Peter Kirk Centre should be designated as the polling place for the new Stansted East polling district. This leaves two potential polling locations for the enlarged Stansted South area consisting of more than 2,500 electors.</p> <p>The new Primary School is located in the heart of Foresthall Park and is therefore a central and convenient location for electors living on the estate. Furthermore, there is a footpath link at the end of Shaws Close nearly opposite the school which links directly to Stoney Common and then through to the Mountfitchet estate.</p> <p>It must immediately be said that the use of the main hall at the school would almost certainly require the school to close for polling. There are no SATS exams due during the week beginning 4 May 2015 but there can be no indication of future exam commitments beyond next year and the impact that would have on school activities.</p> <p>The use of the school to accommodate two polling stations would not be feasible unless the main hall was to be designated. Once the hall was hired for election use, the school authorities would have to decide the feasibility of remaining open while polling was in progress.</p> |



|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Site visit report     | <p>The school is considered to be an ideal polling location in terms of convenience, access and the facilities that are available. It is centrally located in relation to the population it will be serving. The car park is situated close to the main entrance. If the school remains open an arrangement will be made to reserve an agreed number of spaces for use by voters. There is a wide doorway providing access directly to the hall from the pathway leading to the main school entrance.</p> <p>There is an internal space in the hall measuring 19m x 10m. This is more than sufficient for the location of the required two polling stations. As to be expected in a modern school building the facilities provided throughout are excellent.</p> <p>In all respects the school is judged ideal for polling use serving a large population area.</p> |
| Score awarded         | 49  |
| <b>Recommendation</b> | That St Mary's C of E Primary School is designated as the polling place for Stansted South.   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed  | COMMENTS   |
|------------------|---|--|
| Stansted South   | <p><b>The Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre, Forest Hall Road, Stansted</b></p> | <p>At present the Romeera Leisure Centre serves as the polling place for both Stansted South-East and Foresthall Park (the section of the estate still in Birchanger ward). This has been confusing as the two stations serve electors in different wards.</p> <p>The boundary changes provide an opportunity to unify the whole of this much expanded residential part of Stansted into a single polling district serving in excess of 2,500 electors.</p> <p>The Leisure Centre has been used for polling in this part of Stansted since 2012. It was always the intention to assess the suitability of the new primary school as soon as the building became available and now is a convenient time to make any change considered necessary.</p>  |
|                  | <p>General commentary</p>   |  |
|                  | <p>Site visit report</p>  | <p>The leisure centre is located at the southern extremity of the residential areas known at the Foresthall park and Mountfitchet estates. It is reasonably convenient for most electors but is less central than the new primary school. The polling place also serves the Burton End and Bury Lodge Lane areas to the south but the bulk of the population lies north of Forest Hall Road.</p> <p>Suitable arrangements have been made to ensure the main sports hall can accommodate polling facilities. To enable this to work properly, the entrance turnstile is disabled while polling is taking place. There are more than a sufficient number of parking spaces (although many of these are still in use for other activities at the leisure centre) leading to a wide entrance doorway. A second wide doorway then leads to the reception area which voters must access to gain entrance to the sports hall. The sports hall is then accessed by another set of doors across the reception area.</p> <p>As might be expected, the sports hall has a large internal space measuring some 18m x 32m. Only one end of the hall is ever utilised for polling. Most of the space is left vacant while polling is in progress.</p> <p>It is not ideal that the leisure centre remains open to the public during polling but other activities do not generally interfere with the administration of polling activities as separate internal entrances are used. On one occasion the hall was used as a count venue.</p> <p>Facilities are generally very good but the building is expensive to use and the space hired is vastly greater than the space needed to organise polling.</p> |
|                  | <p>Score awarded</p>  | <p>46</p>  |
|                  | <p><b>Recommendation</b></p>  | <p>Designate St Mary's C of E Primary School as the polling place in substitution for the Leisure Centre.</p>  |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed       | COMMENTS  |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Thaxted          | <b>Bolford Street Hall</b> |   |
|                  | General commentary         | <p>The parish of Thaxted comprises a single polling district comprising some 2,300 electors. At some point in the future development pressures may lead to a necessity to consider dividing Thaxted into two separate polling districts but that point has not yet been reached.</p> <p>Except on one specific occasion when it was unavailable, Bolford Street Hall has served as the polling venue in Thaxted for many years. At a late stage of the first consultation, the Parish Council proposed the use of the Church Hall in Margaret Street instead, apparently for the reason that the trustees of the Bolford Street Hall find constant interruption for polling use inconvenient. The hall is booked regularly for pre-school session on Thursdays and these are cancelled on polling days.</p> <p>An assessment of the Church Hall has been made (see separate report).</p>  |
|                  | Site visit report          | <p>Bolford Street Hall is located west of the town centre along the road leading to Cutlers Green and Debden Green. It is well established as the polling venue for Thaxted and is considered convenient for the majority of electors.</p> <p>There are at least 22 parking spaces in a self-contained area just off Bolford Street. The entrance to the hall is well surfaced and easily accessible both from the street and from the car park. The hall is accessed via double outer doors with a total width of 1.4m. A large lobby area then leads to another set of wide double doors and this leads in turn to another utility area giving access to the main hall itself.</p> <p>The internal space dimensions of the hall measure 8m x 13m. Ideally the hall would be wider than 8m to accommodate two separate polling stations (but see report for the Church hall which compares unfavourably).</p> <p>All other facilities at the hall are considered adequate and suitable for use.</p> <p>There seems no dispute about the suitability of the building for polling use. The Parish Council's argument turns on the matter of inconvenience. If another building with similar good standard facilities were available proper consideration could be given to making a change. That is not the case. Convenience for other users of the hall is not a material consideration in determining the suitability of a polling place.</p> |
|                  | Score awarded              | 46  |
|                  | <b>Recommendation</b>      | Continue to designate Bolford Street Hall as the polling place for Thaxted.   |

**APPENDIX B - SITE VISITS REPORT**

| Polling District | Building(s) assessed                         | COMMENTS   |
|------------------|--|--|
| THAXTED          | <b>Church Hall, Margaret Street, Thaxted</b> |  |
|                  | General commentary                           | See commentary under Bolford Street Hall for background information to the suggestion made by Thaxted Parish Council.  |
|                  | Site visit report                            | <p>The Church Hall is located along the narrow road at Margaret Street adjoining the public car park. The distance to the car park entrance from the bottom of the steps leading to the hall at street level is approximately 40m. There is no parking at the hall itself but one or two cars may be able to park on the road.</p> <p>The hall is more central than the hall at Bolford Street but in every other respect is considered a less suitable location.</p> <p>The access arrangements can be described as follows. There are three sets of external steps leading to the main entrance, comprising of 11 steps in total. It would be difficult but not impossible for a wheelchair bound voter to access the hall via the main entrance. The doorway width of 1.2m would permit access but the steps would be awkward and lead into a constricted lobby space and then internal doors 1.15m wide.</p> <p>However, there is a steep well surfaced path leading round the side of the building to another entrance with a doorway width of 1.4m. This door gives direct access to the main hall. The distance from the road to the side entrance is approximately 30m. At one point where the path turns a corner the width of the path is only 0.6m. This is the main entrance used by disabled users of the hall.</p> <p>Access arrangements are not considered to be of a sufficiently high standard to be used for polling, provided that a more accessible building is available. Ideally, it should be possible to use the same entrance for all electors and this is the general aim in designating polling places.</p> <p>The internal space dimensions of the hall measure 6m x 9.5m. This space is not considered adequate to accommodate two polling stations.</p> |
|                  | Score awarded                                | 36   |
|                  | <b>Recommendation</b>                        | Retain Bolford Street Hall as the polling place for Thaxted.   |



## UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER  
Telephone (01799) 510510, Fax (01799) 510550  
Textphone Users 18001  
Email [uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk) Website [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

**Chief Executive: John Mitchell**

Peter Snow  
Democratic and Electoral Services  
Manager  
Uttlesford District Council

22 October 2014

Our ref: PJS  
Your ref:

Please ask for Mr Snow  
01799 510430  
Email: [psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)

Dear Peter,

### **Polling District Review – formal consultation stage 2**

You invited me to comment on the stage 2 proposals as part of the polling district review. Since stage 1 of the review you have filled in much of the missing detail and undertaken a great deal of work in visiting and assessing both existing and potential venues.

Looking again at the comments I made at the first stage in mid-September, I feel there is little I can usefully add to those comments. As far as the designation of particular venues is concerned I would add only that, in adopting a revised scheme, members should concern themselves solely with the convenience of electors and try to disregard other factors such as the implications for schools of enforcing closure on polling days.

My duty is to administer all elections in accordance with the law. I take that responsibility very seriously at all times. I am especially aware of the potential for problems to arise at a high profile election such as we are expecting next May. That being so, I would urge the Council to ensure that polling facilities are fully capable of meeting the demands of administering combined polls with the accompanying challenge of high voter turnout.

Yours sincerely

John Mitchell  
Chief Executive and Returning Officer

KATHERINE SEMAR JW

**Peter Snow**

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**From:** Peter Snow  
**Sent:** 08 October 2014 15:43  
**To:** admin@katherinesemar-jun.essex.sch.uk  
**Subject:** Possible election use at Katherine Semar Junior School

Dear Mrs Callaghan

Following the visit Rebecca and I made to your school last week I wonder whether the school governors have yet had the opportunity to consider the implications for the school of your hall being designated for polling station use? I have to prepare a report by early next week for the Electoral Working Group commenting on the suitability of the various buildings under consideration. It will help me a great deal to have some idea of the feasibility of the school remaining open while being used as a polling facility. You said that you would explore the option of keeping the school open bearing in mind that the hall is not used for meals or classes and is not generally used for external bookings.

Any feedback you can provide from the school's perspective will be really helpful. As I said to you last week, as long as the hall and the entrance to the building is provided exclusively for use in conjunction with the operation of the polling station, and at least 10 parking spaces can be cordoned off for our use, I do not see any difficulty in the school remaining open unless there are security or safeguarding concerns.

Of course no decision has yet been taken and any information you can provide will be helpful in making a proper assessment of the options available to me.

Many thanks for your kind hospitality last week.

Yours sincerely

Peter Snow  
Democratic and Electoral Services Manager  
01799 510430  
[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)

KATHERINE SEMAR SW

**Peter Snow**

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**From:** Katherine Semar Junior Admin Email <Admin@katherinesemar-jun.essex.sch.uk>  
**Sent:** 09 October 2014 07:43  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** School Hall

Dear Mr Snow

I think it is very much if the school needs to be used we will work around this at the time.

The Gobs are not opposed to the school being used.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind Regards

*Rachel Callaghan*

**Peter Snow**

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**From:** Heads PA <HeadsPA@swchs.net>  
**Sent:** 30 September 2014 13:02  
**To:** Peter Snow; Rebecca Dobson  
**Cc:** Hilary Goldsmith; Mr Lee (Site Manager); Mrs Hartshorne; Barbara Calland (barbara.calland@btinternet.com); Mark Hayes; markhayes@christianaction.org.uk  
**Subject:** Message from John Hartley

Dear Peter and Rebecca

Thank you for coming in to school this morning – it was good to have the opportunity to explain to you the school's position on being used as a polling station next May.

As has been found to be the case with other schools in Uttlesford, I do not believe it would be possible for SWCHS to be used as a polling station without closing the site to students for the day. In line with our safeguarding duties, all visitors to the site during school hours are required to sign in and out at school reception. Staff and students know there should never be any adult on site who is not either wearing a staff or visitor's badge. Indeed, we encourage students to challenge adults who are not appropriately badged. In this way we are fulfilling the DfE and Ofsted's requirements with regard to safeguarding children. Given that I understand electors could not be asked to sign in, I would have no alternative but to close the school for the day. Closing the school on 10<sup>th</sup> May is not acceptable to the governors and myself because the students would be losing a day's preparation and revision for the vital GCSE and A level examinations which would be starting a few days later. Future education and career opportunities depend on the results our students achieve and I am unwilling to do anything which might jeopardise their chances of maximising their achievements.

I suggested three alternative possibilities; St Mark's College, the District Council offices and the Church at the top of the High Street. Although you said it was just impossible to use the District Council offices, I do find it hard to accept that there is nowhere in that building that could not be used as a polling station. Surely that would be preferable to interrupting students' preparations for their exams?

You did ask for the dimensions of our gymnasium, they are; 18m x 12m

In conclusion, I very much hope you and the District Council will act in the best interests of students and use an alternative site next May as a polling station.

Kind regards  
 John Hartley

**Mrs Kathleen Hutchinson**  
 Head's PA

**Saffron Walden County High School**

Audley End Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4UH

Tel: 01799 513030 Ext; 204 | Fax: 01799 513031 | Email: [headspa@swchs.net](mailto:headspa@swchs.net)

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**Peter Snow**

---

**From:** Peter Snow  
**Sent:** 02 October 2014 10:53  
**To:** 'Heads PA'  
**Cc:** Hilary Goldsmith; Mr Lee (Site Manager); Mrs Hartshorne; Barbara Calland (barbara.calland@btinternet.com); Mark Hayes; markhayes@christianaction.org.uk; Rebecca Dobson  
**Subject:** RE: Message from John Hartley

Dear John

Thank you for your kind hospitality on Tuesday morning and for following up with the information requested about the dimensions of your gymnasium.

Your views about the use of the school are very clearly expressed and nothing less than I would expect. You are protecting the interests of your school in a robust but entirely reasonable manner. As explained this morning, I will of course consider all of the possible options for providing suitable polling facilities in the Audley South polling district and take full account of all that you have said. It will be a members' decision and I can only recommend.

As for the option of designating the Council Offices, I can assure you that this option will be assessed carefully and placed before members for decision. I think it is a little unfair to say there is a reluctance to use the offices. All potential polling locations are assessed against a number of criteria including, location, suitable access arrangements, internal space dimensions, parking provision and so on and are scrutinised very carefully. I have to bear in mind that I have to make suitable and adequate provision for nearly 2,500 electors with a likely turnout of 70-75%, resulting in an average of 100 electors per hour accessing the polling station. Each elector will be marking three separate ballot papers. That number of electors means the provision of two polling stations will most definitely be required. In my judgement that rules out the provision of a mobile unit and also means the internal space dimensions of the room in which polling is located must be adequate to accommodate two stations and to keep them as separate and distinct areas to deal with the throughput of voters.

The only possible locations for polling at London Road are the staff room and the council chamber. Of those, the staff room is simply too small a space (two separate areas of approx. 6m x 4.5m and with internal pillars) to accommodate two polling stations. The council chamber is my centre of operations for elections and is in use for work in connection with opening and checking postal ballots on polling day. Added to that it is located on the first floor accessed by a wide stairway and a lift in the atrium area. I would not be prepared to recommend the use of a first floor facility. The remainder of the building is used as offices and not accessible to the public. Voters would need to access any space designated via the reception area and along internal corridors through security doors. This is wholly impracticable. Neither would I recommend the use of a mobile unit.

In terms of proximity to voters the council offices would be preferable to any of the other locations under consideration but reasons of practicality seem to me to rule it out.

St Marks College is simply too far removed from the centres of population to be considered seriously. The church at the top of the High Street is located in the wrong polling area and lacks parking provision. In my judgement the choice narrows to the Friends' School or the CHS. I will of course put all of your comments before members for their consideration.

I appreciate the concerns you mention about your safeguarding responsibilities and do not underestimate that in any way. However, it does seem to me possible that the school could continue to operate by isolating the lower car park off Copperfields and the ground floor entrance to the sports hall complex including the gymnasium. That of course would come down ultimately to your judgement and the conditions set by your governors. It seems to me that the external steps area could be barriered off if needed and with the provision of good and clear signage,

electors could be quite easily confined to the designated areas. Anybody found wandering around any other part of the school site could continue to be challenged as would happen normally.

As I have said, I do consider the gym area to be a realistic option for the location of a polling facility and will ask members to weigh the merits and disadvantages against the other options available. It is located nearer the bottom of the hill via the Copperfields entrance and therefore reasonably accessible for most electors in the polling district area. However, I will of course make plain to members the concerns of the school.

I do have one further question I forgot to ask you on Tuesday. In the event that the gym is selected as the polling place, would it be possible please to clear the gym area of equipment for the duration of polling activities and leave it as an open space? We would of course meet your reasonable costs in any adaptations or other work needed to accommodate us.

If you have any further comments please do let me know. The consultation close on 24 October and I will report to the Electoral Working Group on 28 October. The Working Group will then recommend to Council on 11 November. That meeting will set the scheme to be adopted and I will of course write to you after that to let you know the outcome.

Best wishes

Peter Snow  
Democratic and Electoral Services Manager  
01799 510430  
[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)

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**From:** Heads PA [<mailto:HeadsPA@swchs.net>]

**Sent:** 30 September 2014 13:02

**To:** Peter Snow; Rebecca Dobson

**Cc:** Hilary Goldsmith; Mr Lee (Site Manager); Mrs Hartshorne; Barbara Calland ([barbara.calland@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.calland@btinternet.com)); Mark Hayes; [markhayes@christianaction.org.uk](mailto:markhayes@christianaction.org.uk)

**Subject:** Message from John Hartley

Dear Peter and Rebecca

Thank you for coming in to school this morning – it was good to have the opportunity to explain to you the school's position on being used as a polling station next May.

As has been found to be the case with other schools in Uttlesford, I do not believe it would be possible for SWCHS to be used as a polling station without closing the site to students for the day. In line with our safeguarding duties, all visitors to the site during school hours are required to sign in and out at school reception. Staff and students know there should never be any adult on site who is not either wearing a staff or visitor's badge. Indeed, we encourage students to challenge adults who are not appropriately badged. In this way we are fulfilling the DfE and Ofsted's requirements with regard to safeguarding children. Given that I understand electors could not be asked to sign in, I would have no alternative but to close the school for the day. Closing the school on 10<sup>th</sup> May is not acceptable to the governors and myself because the students would be losing a day's preparation and revision for the vital GCSE and A level examinations which would be starting a few days later. Future education and career opportunities depend on the results our students achieve and I am unwilling to do anything which might jeopardise their chances of maximising their achievements.

I suggested three alternative possibilities; St Mark's College, the District Council offices and the Church at the top of the High Street. Although you said it was just impossible to use the District Council offices, I do find it hard to accept that there is nowhere in that building that could not be used as a polling station. Surely that would be preferable to interrupting students' preparations for their exams?

Page 58

You did ask for the dimensions of our gymnasium, they are; 18m x 12m

**Peter Snow**

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**From:** Stephen Welch <stephenwelch@friends.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 26 September 2014 12:28  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** Re: Friends' School Polling

Dear Peter

I can assure you that a booking for our Assembly Hall would be treated as a firm booking. I look forward to hearing from you, once the final decision has been taken.

With thanks

Stephen

On 26 September 2014 11:41, Peter Snow <[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)> wrote:

Dear Stephen

Thank you for meeting with me this morning and for taking the time to show me your sports hall facility. I am grateful that you are able to confirm the Assembly Hall will not be required for exams on 7 May next year and therefore available for election use.

As I said to you this morning, I am anxious to ensure the provision of an adequate and convenient polling facility for the 2,500 electors in Audley South for the combined Parliamentary/local elections taking place next year and this will really preclude the use of a mobile unit unless there is no alternative available. Although I will be designating polling places for a five year period I am slightly more relaxed about what happens from 2016 onwards.

However, having said that I would hope and expect that a booking made for the Assembly Hall will be treated as a firm booking not subject to change before the election takes place. If we can proceed on that basis I think there is every prospect that the Friends' School will be selected as the polling place for Audley South and I will be able to confirm that to you by the middle of November.

It seems to me that the Sports Hall is potentially suitable as a fall-back option, but only if the Assembly Hall is not for any reason available on a particular date.

Best wishes

Peter

**From:** Stephen Welch [mailto:[stephenwelch@friends.org.uk](mailto:stephenwelch@friends.org.uk)]  
**Sent:** 26 September 2014 10:08

## Peter Snow

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**From:** Peter Snow  
**Sent:** 26 September 2014 11:42  
**To:** 'Stephen Welch'  
**Subject:** RE: Friends' School Polling

Dear Stephen

Thank you for meeting with me this morning and for taking the time to show me your sports hall facility. I am grateful that you are able to confirm the Assembly Hall will not be required for exams on 7 May next year and therefore available for election use.

As I said to you this morning, I am anxious to ensure the provision of an adequate and convenient polling facility for the 2,500 electors in Audley South for the combined Parliamentary/local elections taking place next year and this will really preclude the use of a mobile unit unless there is no alternative available. Although I will be designating polling places for a five year period I am slightly more relaxed about what happens from 2016 onwards.

However, having said that I would hope and expect that a booking made for the Assembly Hall will be treated as a firm booking not subject to change before the election takes place. If we can proceed on that basis I think there is every prospect that the Friends' School will be selected as the polling place for Audley South and I will be able to confirm that to you by the middle of November.

It seems to me that the Sports Hall is potentially suitable as a fall-back option, but only if the Assembly Hall is not for any reason available on a particular date.

Best wishes  
Peter

**From:** Stephen Welch [mailto:stephenwelch@friends.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 26 September 2014 10:08  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Cc:** Anna Chaudhri; Marion Grainge  
**Subject:** Re: Friends' School Polling

Dear Peter

It was good to meet with you this morning. I have checked with our exams officer who has confirmed that our Assembly Hall will not be in use for exams on Thursday 7 May 2015 and is therefore available for use as a polling station.

With thanks  
Stephen

On 23 September 2014 09:12, Peter Snow <[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)> wrote:

Dear Stephen

Friday at 9.30am sounds absolutely fine for me thanks and I will see you then. I will have my colleague Rebecca Dobson with me.

**Peter Snow**

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**From:** Simon Lloyd <Simon@saffronwalden.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 10 October 2014 12:02  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** RE: Polling District Review - stage 2 consultation

Dear Peter,

Our Town Council met last night and one of the items on the agenda was the review of the Polling District Review – Stage 2 consultation. Just to inform you that the review was approved and they did not have any recommendations.... Back to you please!!

Regards, and enjoy the week-end,

*Simon*

SJA LLOYD MBE  
Town Clerk Saffron Walden  
11 Emson Close  
Saffron Walden  
Essex CB10 1HL

Tel: 01799-516501

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**From:** Peter Snow [<mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 24 September 2014 18:29  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** Polling District Review - stage 2 consultation

*Message distribution: all district and county councillors; parish and town council clerks; Sir Alan Haselhurst MP; MEPs in the Eastern Region; and representatives of political parties and pressure groups active in the Uttlesford district*

Please find attached various documents published today on [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk) relating to stage 2 of the public consultation for the review of polling districts and places in the Uttlesford district. Any comments or proposals for alternative polling arrangements must be received by me please by no later than **Friday 24 October 2014**.

The website includes a pack containing all representations received at the first stage of the public consultation.

Peter Snow  
Democratic and Electoral Services Manager  
01799 510430  
[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)

**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL**

Council Offices, Crafton Green House, 72 Chapel Hill  
Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex CM24 8AQ

Clerk: Mrs Ruth Clifford

Office Hours: 10am to 1pm



Tel/Fax: 01279 813214  
parishcouncil@stansted.net

P Snow Esq  
Uttlesford District Council  
Council Offices  
London Road  
SAFFRON WALDEN  
Essex CB11 4ER

16 October 2014

Dear Peter

**POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW IN THE DISTRICT OF UTTLESFORD**

This Parish Council has considered the Stage 2 consultation document and is largely in favour of the proposals. Following our full Parish Council meeting on 8 October when this issue was discussed, our objections relate to the loss of one polling place – the Youth Centre in Lower Street and to the use of Bentfield Primary School for Stansted West.

**Stansted South and Birchanger Ward**

Whilst the Romeera Leisure Centre is easily accessible for most people living at Foresthall Park, it is quite some distance to go for those living in and around the Mountfitchet Estate, especially if they do not have their own transport. If you retained the Youth Centre to serve Stansted South and Birchanger, there is a public bus service which takes residents from the Mountfitchet Estate down into Lower Street – an easy walk then to the Youth Centre. There is no such bus to take people from that Estate up to the Leisure Centre.

**Stansted East and Stansted West**

We recognise that the use of primary schools as polling places is very disruptive for children, staff and working parents. We actually believe that the Lower Street site is large enough to provide two polling places – you could use one part of the building for Stansted South and Birchanger electors, and the other part as a polling place for Stansted East, leaving the Peter Kirk Centre to be used by Stansted West.

We hope that the Electoral Working Group will note the comments from the Full Council meeting which represents our residents and community.

Yours sincerely

Ruth A Clifford  
Clerk to the Council

**Rebecca Dobson**

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**From:** Peter Snow  
**Sent:** 22 October 2014 15:27  
**To:** Rebecca Dobson  
**Subject:** FW: Polling District Review

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**From:** Thaxted Parish Council [mailto:clerk@thaxted.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 25 September 2014 15:48  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** RE: Polling District Review

Hi Peter,

Thanks for your reply. The contact for the Church Hall is David Morgan. He can be contacted on 01371 830132.

I wasn't present at the meeting where this was discussed but having asked councillors I have been told that the trustees of BSH find the disruption to regular hires on Thursday a pain. The Church Hall was apparently keen to take on the role they had many years ago.

Hope this helps. If I glean anymore information I will forward it to you.

Best regards

*Julie Abel*

Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council  
Community Information Centre  
7 Town Street  
**THAXTED**  
**Essex CM6 2LD**  
**Tel: 01371 831952**

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**From:** Peter Snow [mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 25 September 2014 15:13  
**To:** Clerk to Thaxted PC  
**Subject:** RE: Polling District Review

Julie

I confirm that I have received the PC's brief representation dated 11 September stating its preferred polling location as the Church Hall in Margaret Street. However, there is no accompanying explanation for this proposal, or any reasons put forward as to why the Church Hall is regarded as preferable to the long standing polling facility at Bolford Street. Can you please let me have a statement of the PC's reasons for making this suggestion to enable me to take it forward.

I will now need to visit both locations to make a direct comparison of the merits of each building before I am able to report back to my members with a recommendation. Do you have contact details please for the Church Hall?

Regards

Peter Snow  
Democratic and Electoral Services Manager  
01799 510430  
[psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:psnow@uttlesford.gov.uk)

---

**From:** Thaxted Parish Council [<mailto:clerk@thaxted.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 25 September 2014 09:08  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Cc:** [terry@thaxted.co.uk](mailto:terry@thaxted.co.uk); [victoriaandclive@googlemail.com](mailto:victoriaandclive@googlemail.com)  
**Subject:** FW: Polling District Review

Good Morning Peter,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the proposed scheme and representations received at the first stage of the public consultation. You will see that we did notify you of the parish council's view on this earlier this month however this doesn't seem to be reflected in the latest documentation. Does that mean that there is an error or has the view of the council not been accepted? I'd be grateful if you could let me know as I'm sure councillors will ask me!

Best regards

*Julie Abel*

Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council  
Community Information Centre  
7 Town Street  
**THAXTED**  
**Essex CM6 2LD**  
**Tel: 01371 831952**

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**From:** Rebecca Dobson [<mailto:rdobson@uttlesford.gov.uk>]  
**Sent:** 11 September 2014 16:45  
**To:** Clerk to Thaxted PC  
**Subject:** FW: Polling District Review

Hi Julie, thanks for this response.

Regards

Rebecca Dobson  
Principal Democratic Services Officer



Uttlesford District Council  
Council Offices  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
CB11 4ER  
Tel: 01799 510510 (direct line 510433)  
Email: [rdoobson@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:rdoobson@uttlesford.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

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**From:** Peter Snow  
**Sent:** 11 September 2014 16:37  
**To:** Rebecca Dobson  
**Subject:** FW: Polling District Review

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**From:** Thaxted Parish Council  
**Sent:** 11 September 2014 16:36:59 (UTC) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London  
**To:** Peter Snow  
**Subject:** Polling District Review

Dear Peter,

The Council has considered the options for polling in the Town and agreed that the Church Hall in Margaret Street is its preferred location.

Best regards

*Julie Abel*

Clerk to Thaxted Parish Council  
Community Information Centre  
7 Town Street  
**THAXTED**  
**Essex CM6 2LD**  
**Tel: 01371 831952**

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THAXTED

Mr P Snow  
Uttlesford District Council



2 Gallows Hill  
Saffron Walden  
Essex CB11 4DA

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2014

Dear Peter

I have heard on the grapevine (please forgive me if it is untrue), that you may be switching the venue for the polling station for next years' elections to the Church Hall in Thaxted rather than Bolford Street Hall.

As you know my wife and I have been Presiding Officer and Pole Clerk at Thaxted for over 20 years and so have an interest in this development. As a result I am not sure how suitable the Church Hall would be for such a busy Polling Station with two boxes.

The access is very poor for elderly or disabled voters and parking on a busy corner could result in traffic congestion at busy times. Furthermore the hall is much smaller than Bolford Street which itself gets very full at peak voting times with queues reaching back to the front doors.

I did speak to one of your colleagues on Tuesday regarding my concerns and I raise these points only to ensure the elections run smoothly.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Barker

*Concerns expressed by telephone  
by Joan Francis  
c. Lan Bennett 6/10/14*