

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Date of 2014 local elections

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Brandon Lewis): As I informed the House on 26 March, *Official Report*, column 84WS, we published a consultation document inviting views on whether or not we should, subject to Parliamentary approval, move the date of the English local elections from Thursday 1 May 2014 to the same day as the European Parliamentary election. At the time of the consultation the actual date of the European Parliamentary Elections had yet to be formally decided.

That consultation closed on 13 May and we have received 155 representations, including from the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators, the Local Government Association and many of the councils that would be affected. Whilst the consultation shows there are mixed views on moving the date, some two thirds of the 155 consultation responses favoured the change of date, including the Electoral Commission.

The Council of the European Union has now confirmed that the European Parliamentary elections will be held between 22 to 25 May 2014 and so the date for elections to the European Parliament in the United Kingdom will be 22 May.

In the light of the European decision, and having carefully considered all the representations received, the practical course of action is to move the local government elections to the same day. Holding two elections within three weeks of each other would be inconvenient to voters. I appreciate that the arguments are finely balanced, and I would observe that this does not necessarily create a precedent for any future set of elections.

So I am today laying a draft of the Local Elections (Ordinary Day of Elections in 2014) Order 2013 which, if approved by Parliament and made no later than 31 October, would move the local election day in England, in 2014, to the date of the European Parliamentary election.

The local elections which are affected by this change of date are the elections to over ninety district councils in England, all metropolitan district councils, and all London boroughs plus a small number of parishes, as well as five mayoral elections. A list of the relevant local authorities is included in the Explanatory Memorandum which accompanies the draft Order I have today laid before the House.