

Partial Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

East Brighton and Withdean wards of
Brighton & Hove City Council

Consultation Document

Consultation Period runs from 21 September to 12 October 2011



1. Background to the Review

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. A full review including wide consultation was carried out in autumn 2010, and changes took effect for the City Council elections in May 2011.

Following the City Council elections, issues have arisen about two of the Council's designated polling stations. A partial review is therefore necessary in the wards of East Brighton and Withdean.

2. Definitions

"Polling districts" are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.

"Polling places" are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.

The polling place should in normal circumstances be situated within the polling district for which it is designated, but in some circumstances, for example where no suitable polling place can be found, then the polling place may be designated outside the polling district.

"Polling stations" are the number of issuing desks in the building that is the designated polling place, which generally range from one to three. The Returning Officer determines the number of polling stations depending on the electorate at a particular election. Wherever possible there should be no more than 2,500 electors allotted to a polling station.

3. The Review Process

The Returning Officer's proposals have been included in this consultation paper.

The council invites comments on the proposals. Public notice about the consultation will be given. The consultation paper will be sent to councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties, and any other interested groups or persons, including those who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

4. The Review Timetable

The timetable for the review is set out below:

Consultation document to be circulated	Wednesday 21 September 2011
Closing date for representations	Wednesday 12 October 2011
Final proposals published via Agenda papers and website	Monday 7 November 2011
Council's Governance Committee meeting – approval of polling place changes	Tuesday 15 November 2011
Completion of review and publication of electoral register	Thursday 1 December 2011
Possible PCC elections	Thursday 3 May 2012

5. The Proposals

This document sets out details of current polling district and polling places for the two wards in question, and details of issues and any proposed changes.

The principles behind these proposals are:

- a) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate or inconvenient.
- b) To ensure, as far as practicable, that any new polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
- c) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- d) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

6. Making comments

Any elector may make representations. Representations must be received by **Wednesday 12 October 2011**, and should be addressed to:

Electoral Services
Brighton & Hove City Council
FREEPOST BR 2003
Town Hall
Brighton
BN1 1ZW

or emailed to: electors@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Polling station scheme and Returning Officer's Proposals

Electorates as at 1 July 2011

Kemptown Constituency

East Brighton Ward

Polling District	Electorate	Existing Polling Place	Number of polling stations
DS	1306	Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk Way	1
DT	1039	Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk Way	1
DU	2080	Whitehawk Youth Centre, Findon Road	1
DV	1532	St Mark's CE Primary School, Manor Road	1
DW	1163	TS Nautilus, 39a Chesham Road	1
DX	2054	Kemp Town Crypt Community Centre, St George's Road	1
DY	521	Craven Vale Resource Centre, Craven Road	1
DZ	621	Bristol Estate Community Centre, Donald Hall Road	1

Whitehawk Youth Centre has been used as a polling station for several years. It is in the process of being demolished, so alternative premises need to be found.

It is possible that Whitehawk Primary School could be used, but that may cause disruption to children's education.

Another possibility would be the new Whitehawk Library, which will be ready to view in September. However, the geography of the area could mean that the Library would not be convenient for many voters.

The Returning Officer's staff have visited the Whitehawk Inn Training Centre, and consider this to be a much more suitable venue for polling. It is very close to where the previous polling station was located, in the more densely populated southern part of the polling district. It is also on the main bus route, and close to the local shops. Access to the Centre is very good, and there are suitable facilities for voters.

Q1 Do you approve of the Whitehawk Inn Training Centre being used as a polling station for DU polling district?

Q2 Are there any other alternatives that the Council should consider?

Withdean Ward

Polling District	Electorate	Existing Polling Place	Number of polling stations
IU	2302	Church of the Good Shepherd Hall, Dyke Road	1
IV	2053	Minor Club House, Withdean Sports Complex	1
IW	1934	Westdene Primary School, Bankside	1
IX	1451	Varndean College, Surrenden Road	1
IY	1017	Balfour Junior School, Balfour Road	1
IZ	2246	Knogle Hall, Knogle Road	1

The Governors of Westdene Primary School have raised concerns about the use of the school as a polling station, because of the disruption caused to the school timetable and children's education.

Although the Returning Officer is entitled to use schools as polling stations¹, it is reasonable to look for alternative premises if they object to being used.

The Returning Officer's staff have looked at a range of alternative premises, and there appear to be two viable options which would be suitable in terms of accessibility and facilities for voters.

The Ascension Church is one option. Access to the church hall is very good, and there are suitable facilities for voters. There is also a larger space in the church itself, but at the moment accessibility is not ideal.

Westdene Library is another option. This is normally closed on a Thursday, so it could easily operate as a polling station without inconveniencing library users.

Q1 Do you approve of the Ascension Church Hall being used as a polling station for the IW polling district, instead of Westdene Primary School?

OR

Q2 Do you approve of Westdene Library being used as a polling station for the IW polling district, instead of Westdene Primary School?

Q3 Are there any other alternatives that the Council should consider?

¹ Rule 22, Election Rules, Schedule 1, Representation of the People Act 1983

