

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Polling Arrangements</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18 November 2008</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Colin Burt</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 291997
	<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>colin.burt@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>Various</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The committee is being asked to approve the creation of a new polling district in the St. Peter's & North Laine Ward; a minor change to the boundary of a polling district in Woodingdean Ward; and three changes to designated polling places in Patcham, Goldsmid and North Portslade Wards.
- 1.2 The proposals to make these changes emerged from the recent review of polling arrangements in the city.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Committee –

##### A. Approves the following:

- 2.1 That a new polling district (KS) be created in St. Peter's & North Laine Ward, bounded on the south and east by Cheapside and London Road respectively (see paragraph 3.4)
- 2.2 That St. Bartholomew's CE Primary School be designated as the polling place for the new polling district of KS in St. Peter's & North Laine Ward (see paragraph 3.4)
- 2.3 That the boundary of polling district BX in Woodingdean Ward be extended to include all of the properties numbered 10 to 20 Kevin Gardens (see paragraph 3.5)
- 2.4 That the Old Boat Community Centre off Carden Hill be designated as the new polling place for polling district HX in Patcham Ward, replacing Carden Primary School, Carden Avenue (see paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7)

- 2.5 That the Vallance Community Centre in Sackville Road be designated as the new polling place for polling district NX in Goldsmid Ward, replacing St. Barnabas Church Hall, also in Sackville Road (see paragraph 3.8)
- 2.6 That Mile Oak Community Centre in Chalky Road be designated as the new polling place for polling district QY in North Portslade Ward, replacing the Communal Room in Hazelholt residential home, also in Chalky Road (see paragraphs 3. 9 and 3.10)
- B. Authorises the Registration Officer to take the measures, required by law, to bring the changes into effect

### 3. **RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended), a formal review has been conducted recently of polling arrangements in the city. The review has considered polling districts, polling places and ward names only. Local government boundaries, parliamentary constituencies and ward boundaries were outside the scope of this review.
- 3.2 All elected members were contacted and invited to comment on the polling arrangements in the city. Other stakeholders, such as disability groups and political parties, were also asked for their views. Few suggestions for change were received.. In addition to existing data on file in respect of designated polling places, comments from electors and reports from polling station inspectors and presiding officers employed during the 2007 elections were also taken into account.
- 3.3 A proposal to change the name of Hollingbury & Stanmer Ward to Hollingdean & Stanmer Ward is the subject of a separate report to the Governance Committee. The other matters in which a positive recommendation is being made are detailed below.
- 3.4 The boundaries of the polling districts in St. Peter's & North Laine Ward were agreed before the massive re-development of the Brighton Station site. As a result, part of the new development is contained within polling district KY (polling place – Brighton & Hove Foyer, Pelham Street) but the bulk of it is within polling district KV (polling place – Calvary Evangelical Church Hall, Viaduct Road). Unfortunately, this means electors who live in the newly developed area currently have to cross the busy London Road in order to vote. To make voting more convenient for these electors, **the creation of a new polling district (KS) is recommended**, to be bounded on the south and east by Cheapside and London Road respectively. For the time being, pending the development of suitable community facilities on the Brighton Station site, **it is recommended that St. Bartholomew's CE Primary School, Ann Street, be designated as the polling place for this new polling district.**

- 3.5 Nos. 1 to 17 and 2 to 8 Kevin Gardens in Woodingdean Ward are in polling district BX. However, the more recently built properties numbered 10 to 20 Kevin Gardens are currently located within polling district BY. This is because the polling district boundary currently follows what was previously the rear boundary line of properties in Downs Valley Road. As the new properties are numbered within and front on to Kevin Gardens, **it is recommended they should also be included within polling district BX and that the boundary line between the two polling districts be amended accordingly.**
- 3.6 Carden Primary School, Carden Avenue, is the currently designated polling place for polling district HX in Patcham Ward. It was suggested during the review process that this should be changed to the Old Boat Community Centre off Carden Hill. It was reported that the local action group would like to see the Community Centre used as this would attract people to the premises and would also mean that Carden Primary School would not have to lose a day's schooling. A further suggestion was received that voters from adjoining polling district HY, who currently vote at the Gathering Place in Orchid View, could also vote at the Old Boat Community Centre.
- 3.7 As polling places, there is little to choose between them but, for the reasons given above, **it is recommended that the Old Boat Community Centre should replace Carden Primary School as the designated polling place for polling district HX.** However, because of the lie of the land in polling district HY, it could be detrimental to many electors in this polling district if their polling place were also to be changed. The Tenants' Association for the area are reported as being anxious to keep the Gathering Place as a polling place and, as the building is owned by the council, it is not expensive to use. For these reasons, **no change is being recommended in the polling place for polling district HY.**
- 3.8 St. Barnabas Church Hall in Sackville Road is currently designated as the polling place for polling district NX in Goldsmid Ward. This hall is used by Honeycroft, part of the new Children's Centre for the area, and it is disruptive to their work, and expensive to hire, when the premises are used for polling. The Vallance Community Centre, which is next door to Honeycroft, is fully accessible and would be cheaper and less disruptive to use. **It is recommended, therefore, that these premises should replace St. Barnabas Church Hall as the designated polling place for this polling district.**
- 3.9 In September 2002, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to change the designated polling place for polling district QY in North Portslade Ward, from the Mile Oak Recreation Ground Pavilion, College Close, to the Communal Room in the nearby Hazelholt residential home. There are concerns about security at Hazelholt, following an incident where an outsider gained access to the building and stole a handbag, and the elderly residents are not happy about the number of people who are able to enter their building for polling, with no real control over where they go once inside.

- 3.10 The access at the Mile Oak Pavilion has not improved and returning to these premises cannot be recommended. However, Mile Oak Community Centre, which is already the designated polling place for adjoining polling district QW, is a large accessible building, just a few yards from both Hazelholt and the Mile Oak Pavilion. Bearing in mind the residents' concerns over the use of Hazelholt, **it is recommended that Mile Oak Community Centre should replace Hazelholt as the designated polling place for polling district QY.**
- 3.11 If the Committee approves the recommendations above, the Registration Officer is required to make the necessary adaptations to the register of parliamentary electors, and to publish a notice stating that the adaptations have been made by him.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Appropriate ward councillors, the city's three members of Parliament, the Older People's Council and the council's main political groups have all been consulted on these proposals. The Patcham Ward Councillors wish the Old Boat Community Centre to be designated as the polling place for polling districts HX and HY, replacing both Carden Primary School and the Gathering Place. With this exception, the others who have replied have all supported the recommended changes

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications

- 5.1 The report details changes to locations and numbers of polling sites throughout the city, which will attract certain costs. The costs vary, depending on the site, and can include the venue hire, reimbursement of heating and lighting costs and the staffing of the polling stations. However, these costs are minimal (in the region of £500 per site) and are met by Central Government grant rather than this council, with the exception of local council elections.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Stuart Taylor*

*Date: 17 October 2008*

##### Legal Implications

- 5.2 The review referred to in paragraph 3.1 is a requirement of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The statutory requirements of the review, for example to seek representations from those with expertise on access for the disabled (see paragraph 3.2), were met.

The actions of the Registration Officer described in paragraph 3.11 are required under section 18A (5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

*Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon*

*Date: 17 October 2008*

### Equalities Implications

- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken, to ensure that accessibility for voters meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, and the results will be published.

### Sustainability Implications

- 5.4 There are no implications.

### Crime & Disorder Implications

- 5.5 There are no implications.

### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

- 5.6 There are no implications.

### Corporate / Citywide Implications

- 5.7 The recommendations are in line with council priorities, specifically for open and effective city leadership.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

None

