

Subject: Polling Place Review
Date of Meeting: 12 July 2012
Report of: Strategic Director, Resources
Contact Officer: Name: Claire Wardle Tel: 29-1997
E-mail: claire.wardle@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: East Brighton, Hangleton & Knoll, Hove Park, Goldsmid, St Peter's & North Laine, Wish and Withdean

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 A full review of polling districts and polling places, which comprised a formalised series of measures involving consultation, representations and publishing of information, was carried out in the autumn of 2010. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council must carry out such a review at least every four years.
- 1.2 Following the City Council elections in 2011, issues have arisen about six of the Council's designated polling stations.
- 1.3 A public consultation was launched on 23 March 2012 and ended on 1 June 2012, inviting views on alternative venues for polling places. This report addresses the issues raised in the responses and makes recommendations for revised polling arrangements to be implemented henceforth.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 That the polling place for DV, East Brighton Ward, be changed from St Mark's CE Primary School to the Manor Gym;
- 2.2 That the polling place for PX, Hangleton & Knoll Ward, be changed from West Blatchington Primary School to the Hangleton Community Centre;
- 2.3 That Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary School be retained as the polling place for NY/OZ, Hove Park and Goldsmid Wards, in the absence of any suitable alternative;
- 2.4 That the Clarendon Centre be used as a polling place for KS, St Peter's & North Laine Ward, instead of the Friends Centre or St Bartholomew's CE School;

- 2.5 That the Pavilion at Aldrington Recreation Ground, Wish Road, be used as a double polling station for the voters for SW and SX, Wish Ward, due to the unavailability of the Saxon Road Pavilion;
- 2.6 That the polling place for IY, Withdean Ward, be changed from Balfour Primary School to Dorothy Stringer High School;
- 2.7 That the Electoral Services Manager, on behalf of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, be authorised to take the measures, as required by law, to bring the changes into effect;
- 2.8 That the Committee delegates to the Returning Officer (the Chief Executive), following consultation with the Group Leaders and respective ward councillors, the designation of alternative polling places in the event of any polling place not being available at any particular election.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The principles underlying the council's approach to polling districts and polling places are:
 - a) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate.
 - b) To ensure, as far as practicable, that 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.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation period for this review ran for 10 weeks from 23 March to 1 June 2012. Public notice of the review was given in local press and on Town Hall notice boards, and information about the review was made available on the Council's website. Any elector in the Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies was entitled to make representations.
- 4.2 The consultation paper, together with maps of each ward showing the polling district boundaries, can still be viewed on the Council's website [polling place review](#) webpage.
- 4.3 Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties, and other interested groups or persons were also consulted.

4.4 The responses to the consultation are summarised in Appendix 1.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The review of polling districts will mean a minimal change in hire costs. Electoral Services have included all hire costs within their budget for 2012/13.

Finance Officer Consulted: Mike Bentley

Date:01/06/12

Legal Implications:

5.2 The legislative framework for reviews of polling districts and places consists of:
(i) sections 18A to 18 E and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as inserted by section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006; and
(ii) The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2965)

Under the council's scheme of delegation to committees, the Policy & Resources Committee has authority to exercise functions in relation to electoral matters, and would therefore be acting within its remit to agree the recommendations at paragraph 2 above.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 31/05/12

Equalities Implications:

5.3 The Council must ensure that so far as is reasonable and practical every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to people who are disabled. The four new polling places recommended in this report have good disabled access.

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.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The consultation process provided for various locations to be considered and the required changes of venues were identified and considered to be the best alternative to the current sites.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The council is required to review its provision of polling stations and following a consultation process identified the need to change a number of venues.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Polling station scheme, Returning Officer's proposals and summary of responses

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Polling Place Review and Consultation Paper – 20 March 2012
2. Consultation responses – file held by Electoral Services
3. Electoral Commission Circular EC19/2010 – Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations