

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16 January 2014</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Claire Wardle</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-1997
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>claire.wardle@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report deals with a review of the polling districts and polling places provided for elections and referendums that take place within the City of Brighton and Hove. The council is legally required to periodically review polling districts and polling places.
- 1.2 A public consultation started on 4 October and ended on 13 December 2013, inviting views on the current scheme of polling districts and polling places. This report addresses the issues raised in the responses and makes recommendations for revised polling arrangements to be implemented as from 17 February 2014.
- 1.3 The principles underlying the council's approach to polling districts and polling places are:
- (a) To retain the current network of polling places and polling districts as far as possible, to minimise disruption to voters.
  - b) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate.
  - c) To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
  - d) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
  - e) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the proposals for polling districts and places be as outlined in Appendix 1 to this report. In particular:
- 2.2 That the polling place for AU, Rottingdean Coastal ward, be changed from Saltdean Primary School to St Nicholas Church Hall, Saltdean Vale.

- 2.3 That the polling place for EY, Queens Park ward, be changed from Carlton Hill Primary School to Millwood Community Centre, Nelson Row.
- 2.4 That the polling place for FW, Hanover & Elm Grove ward, be changed from Fairlight Primary School to the Children's Centre, St Leonards Road.
- 2.5 That the polling place for HZ, Patcham ward, be changed from Hollingbury Methodist Church Hall to Hollingbury Library, County Oak Avenue.
- 2.6 That the polling place for IY, Withdean ward, be changed from Dorothy Stringer High School to the Cassidy Centre, St Mary's Church.
- 2.7 That the polling place for KS, St Peters & North Laine ward, be changed from the Clarendon Centre to the BMECP Centre, Fleet Street.
- 2.8 That the polling place for NV, Goldsmid ward, be changed from Somerhill Junior School to the Ajax Hall, Brighton & Hove Reform Synagogue, Eaton Road.
- 2.9 That Cottesmore St Mary's RC School be retained as the polling place for NY (Goldsmid ward) and OZ (Hove Park ward).
- 2.10 That the Pavilion in Wish Road be used as a double polling place for SW and SX polling districts in Wish ward.
- 2.11 That the Electoral Services & Local Land Charges 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.
- 2.12 That the Committee delegates to the Returning Officer 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. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 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 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. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended this duty, requiring all local authorities to carry out and complete reviews of polling districts and places in the period of 16 months beginning with 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 and then every five years after that.

- 3.3 The existing Brighton & Hove City Council ward boundaries, and the parliamentary constituency boundaries, are not part of this review, although they will be reviewed periodically in future by the relevant Boundary Committee or Commission.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Analysis and consideration of alternative venues has been taken into account in line with the principles outlined in paragraph 1.3 in proposing the various changes to polling venues.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The consultation period for this review ran for 10 weeks from 4 October to 13 December 2013. Public notice of the review was given, and information about the review made available on the council's website and on the council's consultation portal. Any elector in the Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies was entitled to make representations.
- 5.2 The consultation paper, together with maps of each ward showing the polling district boundaries, can still be viewed on the council's website at <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/voting-and-elections/review-polling-districts-and-polling-places>
- 5.3 The consultation paper was also sent to councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties, the current polling station contacts and 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.
- 5.4 Some further suggestions for change were received during the consultation, and the responses are summarised in Appendix 2.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The recommendations have been made in line with the principles outlined in paragraph 1.3

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

##### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The costs of the review of polling districts and places was met within existing budgets and staff workloads and will result in a minimal change in hire costs of polling stations. For City Council elections these hire costs are met by the Council's Electoral Services budget, but for national elections are funded by central government. .

*Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis*

*Date: 17/12/13*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The legislative framework for reviews of polling districts and places consists of: (i) sections 18A to 18E and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as inserted by section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006; (ii) The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2965); (iii) section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, which introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews.

The principle stated at paragraph 1.3(c) above supports the council's public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, with respect to disabled persons.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Oliver Dixon*

*Date: 20/12/13*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 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.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from the report.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

### *Corporate / Citywide Implications:*

- 7.5 The recommendations are in line with council priorities, including engaging people who live and work in the city, and enabling statutory and democratic processes.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Polling station scheme and Returning Officer's recommendations
2. Summary of comments received during the consultation period

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

None

### **Background Documents**

1. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Consultation Paper – 4 October 2013
2. Consultation responses – file held by Electoral Services
3. Electoral Commission Guidance – Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.