

## **REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' views of the proposed sites for polling stations in the District, in the light of the changes to Ward Boundaries resulting from the Local Government Commissions proposals for the District.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Under The Representation of the People Act 1983 Rochford District Council must designate a polling place for every polling district within the District. The designation of the polling station within each polling place is a matter for the Returning Officer. If no polling place is designated, then the geographical area of each polling district is taken to be the polling place. In special circumstances an adjacent polling district may be appointed as the polling place if no suitable polling station can be identified within the polling district.
- 2.2 Given the increasing lack of publicly owned and publicly accessible buildings, Members are advised that it is unwise to designate a particular building or part of a building as the polling place, as this creates difficulties for the Returning Officer should that building, at some future date, become unavailable for use at election times. If the whole area of the polling district is designated as the polling place, then the Returning Officer has greater flexibility in the choice of polling station.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Following on from the Local Government Commissions examination of the Wards in the District and the changes which have resulted from that, the emphasis has very much been on keeping the same polling stations wherever possible.
- 3.2 The proposed locations for the polling stations for the forthcoming May elections are listed in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 There remains a problem with identifying a suitable station for Rayleigh Central Ward and this is discussed in more detail below.

**3.4 Rayleigh Central Ward (Appendix 2)**

To date no specific site for a polling station has been identified. There are a number of possibilities under consideration. The ward at present comprises two polling districts, RDG and RDG2 until such time as the Electoral Commission makes the County boundaries co-terminus with the District boundaries, when it will revert to one. There is only one building suitable for use as a polling station within the ward itself and that is not owned by the local authority. The building is Sangster Court. An approach has been made to the Project Manager who will consult with the residents and Springboard Housing and report back. Other suitable buildings are outside the ward boundary which is, in itself, not ideal. However, a polling station may be sited outside the boundary in special circumstances, provided that the polling place is also sited in the neighbouring ward. The possible options are:

- a portakabin in the car park of Rayleigh Lodge (Lodge ward)
- Rayleigh Baptist Church hall in the High Street. (Whitehouse ward)

All of the above are still subject to the agreement of the owners.

3.5 The Civic Suite, Hockley Road is also available but it is considered that it should only be considered as a last resort. It is a significant distance to travel from some parts of the ward and necessitates the closure of the Civic Suite to all other users.

3.6 Rayleigh Central ward has 3364 electors. The percentage turnout at the last parliamentary election was approximately 61%. It would be impossible to accommodate 2052 electors in one portakabin, two at least would be required. These portakabins do not readily comply with the requirements regarding accessibility for the disabled. Ramps, portaloos and generators are required also, as are an electrician to wire up the generator and depot staff to visit during the day to top-up the generator.

**4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 If portakabins are required to service Rayleigh Central Ward, the cost will be in the region of £700-£750 per unit. Certainly the costs of hall hire or a donation to Sangster Court's residents fund would be much less.

**5 RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES**

That the District Council designates each polling district as a polling place with the exception of Rayleigh Central ward which, in the special circumstances involved, should include Whitehouse, Lodge and Central wards as the designated polling place.

R.J.Honey

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**Background papers:** None

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POLLING STATION REVIEW	18-Jan-02			Appendix 1
Ward	Polling District	Electorate	Polling Station	Notes
Foulness & Great Wakering	RCA	181	Village Hall, Foulness	
	RCB	1823	Great Wakering Memorial Hall	
	RCC	1372	Bell House, High Street	
	RCD	1285	Methodist Church Hall, High Street	
Barling & Sutton	RCE	389	Parish Hall, Wakering Road	
	RCF	912	Castle Inn, Little Wakering Road	Portakabin. No practical alternative available*
	RCG	110	Sutton Parish Rooms	
Ashington & Canewdon	RCH	982	Ashington Memorial Hall	
	RCJ	186	Ashington United Free Church Hall	
	RCK	316	Ashington United Free Church Hall	
	RCL	1024	Canewdon Village Hall	
	RCM	168	Canewdon Village Hall	Use hall as split station (Was portakabin)
	RCN	80	Paglesham Church Hall Paglesham Road	
	RCO	119	Mission Hall, EastEnd, Paglesham	
	RCP	539	Stambridge Memorial Hall	
Rochford	RCQ	1411	Pembroke House, Sutton Court Drive	
	RCR	2012	Adult Community College, Rocheway	
	RCS	1107	Doggetts School, The Boulevard	
	RCT	756	Rochford Parish Council rooms	
Hawkwell North	RCU	1002	Ashington Memorial Hall	) Outside ward boundary but no practical alternative **
	RCU2	200	Ashington Memorial Hall	) -ditto-
	RCV	2151	Hawkwell Baptist Church, Rectory Road	

Ward	Polling District	Electorate	Polling Station	Notes
Hawkevell South	RCW	2663	Holt Farm School	
	RCX	624	King Edmund School	Possible change from Portakabin to use of main hall***
Hawkevell West	RCY	3124	Village Hall, Main Road	
Hockley Central	RCZ	2808	Evangelical Church Hall, Greensward Lane	
	RDA	1888	Hockley Parish Hall	
	RDA2	372	Hockley Parish Hall	
Hockley North	RDB	1037	Greensward School, Greensward Lane	
	RDB2	500	Greensward School, Greensward Lane	
Hockley West	RDC	1637	SEETEC, Main Road	
Hullbridge	RDD	3128	County Youth Centre, Ferry Road	
	RDE	256	Site Office, Mobile Homes Estate	
	RDF	2013	The Free Church, Lower Road	
Rayleigh Central	RDG	2018	Sangster Court, Church Road or the	Residents of Sangster Ct to be consulted and Rev. Clear has agreed to a site visit
	RDG2	1346	Baptist Church hall, High Road	
Downhall & Rawreth	RDH	2363	Downhall School, Brooklyn Drive	
	RDJ	793	Rawreth Parish Hall, Church Road	
	RDJ2	3	Rawreth Parish Hall, Church Road	

