

POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES REVIEW

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 A review of polling districts and polling places within the District has been carried out as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and this report contains the final proposals of the review.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each polling district. It also has to keep these arrangements under review.
- 2.2 Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 required the Council to undertake a review of the current arrangements by 31 December 2007, and then every four years thereafter. This does not prevent changes being made at any time before the next full review in 2011 if necessary.

3 CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW

- 3.1 The Council published notice of a review of the current arrangements. It then consulted the Returning Officer who made representations on the existing and proposed polling arrangements. Key stakeholders and disability action groups were invited to comment on these proposals.
- 3.2 Any elector could have made representations. Although not specifically required in law, the consultation included local political parties and elected representatives at all levels. The Area Committees were also part of the consultation process.
- 3.3 Managers of all the polling stations have conducted a survey of their premises having specific regard to accessibility issues and have returned a declaration concerning standards at their premises.
- 3.4 The deadline for responses to the consultation was 28 September 2007 and those responses have informed the Returning Officer's final proposals as detailed below.
- 3.5 A notice announcing the completion of the review will be published at the Council offices, on Parish/Town Council notice boards and on the Council's website following Council's agreement to the final proposals.

4 FINAL PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Representations have been received from a number of key stakeholders as shown in Appendix A to this report. These have informed the Returning Officer's final proposals as set out below.

- 4.2 It is proposed that there are no changes to the existing arrangements in the following District wards:-

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Downhall & Rawreth | Hullbridge |
| Foulness & Great Wakering | Lodge |
| Grange | Rochford |
| Hawkwell North | Sweyne Park |
| Hawkwell South | Trinity |
| Hawkwell West | Wheatley |
| Hockley Central | Whitehouse |
| Hockley North | |

- 4.3 Following a request from Paglesham parish clerk to reconsider the proposed merging of the polling districts of RCN and RCO in Ashingdon & Canewdon ward and thereby to continue to use the Mission Hall as the polling station for RCO, the Elections Officer had a meeting on site with a representative from the management of the Hall. It was agreed that some slight ramping (to be provided by the management) at the entrance to the Hall would improve the facilities and the Returning Officer is recommending continuing this use for polling district RCO.
- 4.4 Changes are proposed in the District wards as shown in Appendix B that accompanies this report. The major alteration to the original proposal occurs in Hockley West Ward.
- 4.5 Since the commencement of this review the Returning Officer has received notification that the existing polling station for Hockley West ward, namely a room in Seetec, is no longer to be made available for elections use.
- 4.6 Other options that have been considered are the community centre and Hockley Primary School. However it is the Returning Officer's opinion that, as neither of these buildings are on a bus route and are towards the outer limits of the ward boundary, they cannot be considered to be suitable for this use.
- 4.7 It is therefore proposed to use Hockley public hall in Bullwood Road as the polling station for Hockley West ward in the future as this is on the main bus route and not far from the original polling station at Seetec even though this lies outside the ward boundary.

5 RECOMMENDATION

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

To agree the final proposals for polling arrangements in the District as summarised in this report and set out in Appendix B.

Sarah Fowler

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Background Papers:-

Background Information and Returning Officer's proposals.

Representations from stakeholders.

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