
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 requires the Council to undertake a review of the current arrangements by 31 December 2011. This date has been brought forward to enable any amendments to be in place for the elections and likely referendum on the parliamentary voting system in May 2011, and has enabled us to address the Referendum Chief Counting Officer's instruction that a polling station must not have more than 2500 electors (net of postal voters) allocated to it (the Referendum Chief Counting Officer is the Chair of the Electoral Commission).

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. Details of these proposals were published on the website, and key stakeholders were invited to comment.
- 3.2 Any elector could have made representations. The consultation included local political parties, Members, and Parish and Town Councils. The Council's Citizen Panel were consulted, as was the voluntary sector.
- 3.3 A survey of all polling stations has been conducted to assess suitability and disabled access.
- 3.4 The deadline for responses to the consultation was 28 January 2011 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 To summarise, alternative venues have been considered for the Hungry Horse Public House, Grange Ward; the Site Office at Hockley Caravan Park, Hullbridge Ward; and the Lavers, Trinity Ward. In respect of the Hungry Horse, it is not considered suitable to continue using the public house itself, due to the inevitable noise disruption. The Sheriton Square complex, as suggested by one respondent is private accommodation with poor access and lack of parking. There appear to be no other suitable alternatives in the vicinity. The proposal therefore is to site a mobile unit of sufficient size in the Hungry Horse Public House car park. The Saltings Banqueting Suite is suggested as an alternative to the Site Office at Hockley Caravan Park. In respect of the Lavers, this can now be retained, as the electorate is within the 2500 limit. However, FitzWimarc School is considered to be a more suitable venue in the longer term, if the access issues on site can be resolved and this situation will be kept under review. All the proposed changes are shown in Appendix B.
- 4.3 To comply with the direction from the Electoral Commission, it is intended that the register will be split at those polling stations with an electorate in excess of 2500.
- 4.4 Consideration has also been given to moving the polling station at Grove Wood School, Lodge Ward to the Oak Tree Children's Centre located on the same site.
- 4.5 Those wards where no changes are proposed are detailed in Appendix C to this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** to agree the final proposals for changes to polling arrangements in the District as summarised in this report and set out in Appendix B.

Sarah Fowler

Head of Information & Customer Services

Background Papers:-

Returning Officer's proposals.

Representations from stakeholders

For further information please contact Karen Lindfield (Electoral Services Manager) on:-

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REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2010/2011

List of Persons making representations in response to the Returning Officers draft proposals

| Date | Name | Organisation | Comments |
|----------|----------------------|---|---|
| 22/12/10 | Cllr Mrs J R Lumley | Grange Ward Member | Keen to retain a polling station at The Hungry Horse site, but concerned that Greene King may not allow a mobile unit in the car park. |
| 22/12/10 | Anne-Marie Bates | Stambridge Parish Council | Confirmed that Stambridge Memorial Hall will be out of action for 2011. Car park available for mobile unit. |
| 23/12/10 | Janice Rigby | Rochford Parish Council | Supports the existing arrangements for Rochford Parish. |
| 23/12/10 | Cllr Mrs T J Capon | Ashingdon and Canewdon Ward Member | Suggests that the mobile unit at Stambridge Memorial Hall is sited further back to enable more parking at the front of the Hall. Agreed with the need for additional signage at St Teresa's. Would like to know why two polling stations are maintained at Paglesham. |
| 26/12/10 | Eddie Short | Via Citizens panel | Would like to ensure the needs of the disabled are met. |
| 28/12/10 | David Bodimeade | Via Citizens panel | Considers a mobile unit to be a preferable option for the Hungry Horse site. |
| 30/12/10 | Paul Stanley | Hockley Parish Council | Supports the existing arrangements for Hockley Parish. |
| 30/12/10 | Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins | Foulness and Great Wakering Ward Member | Supports the existing arrangements for Great Wakering. |
| 04/01/11 | Stephen Leigh | Via Citizens panel | Acknowledged the report. |
| 06/01/11 | Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn | Hawkwell South Ward Member | In agreement with suggestion of additional signage for St Teresa's. |

| Date | Name | Organisation | Comments |
|----------|------------------------|---|---|
| 06/01/11 | Tatia Singleton | Oak Tree Children's Centre | Concerned about the disruption to services provided at the Centre if the polling station is moved from Grove Wood School. This issue has now been resolved, as the Headmaster at Grove Wood has agreed to provide a room within the school to accommodate the staff from the Children's Centre. |
| 11/01/11 | Ian Puzey | Paglesham Parish Council | Supports the existing arrangements for Paglesham. |
| 11/01/11 | Linda Cowan | Hullbridge Parish Clerk | In respect of Hockley Park, the residents are aged 55+, and one is registered disabled. As there is a lack of disabled access, would like to suggest The Saltings as an alternative venue. |
| 12/01/11 | Cathy Markwood | Via Citizen's panel | Acknowledged the report. |
| 21/01/11 | Cllr C I Black | Downhall & Rawreth Ward Member | Is keen to retain a polling station at the Hungry Horse site. |
| 21/01/11 | Harry Morris | Great Wakering Parish Council | Supports the existing arrangements for Great Wakering Parish. |
| 25/01/11 | Hilton Brown | Rayleigh & Wickford Constituency Conservative Association | In support of splitting the register for Rayleigh Central, and is of the opinion any changes should be retained for future elections, not just the Referendum. Suggests the Sheriton Square Complex as an alternative to the Hungry Horse Public House. Is of the opinion that the electorate is too large for a mobile unit. If the polling station is retained inside the Hungry Horse it should revert to its' previous location, away from the bar, accessed from the rear entrance. |
| 18/9/07 | Steven & Janet Baldwin | Via Citizen's panel | Do not feel it is necessary to split the register at Hawkwell West (Hawkwell Village Hall). They are not aware of any issues with queuing in the past. |

REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES 2010/2011**Summary of Final Recommendations**

| No. | Ward | Polling Districts | Recommendation |
|------------|------------------|--|--|
| 1. | Hawkwell West | RCY Hawkwell Village Hall | Split the Register due to the Electoral Commission's direction on staffing ratios for the Referendum. |
| 2. | Hullbridge | RDD County Youth Centre RDE Site Office, Hockley Park | Split the Register due to Electoral Commission direction on staffing ratios for the Referendum. Due to the lack of disabled access at the Site Office, Hockley Caravan Park, the polling station will be moved to The Saltings Banqueting Suite, located at the entrance to the caravan park. |
| 3. | Rayleigh Central | RDG Nash Room Methodist Church | Split the Register due to the Electoral Commission's direction on staffing ratios for the Referendum. Use the Wesley Room in addition to the Nash Room at the Methodist Church Hall. |
| 4. | Grange | RDK2 The Traveller's Joy, Hungry Horse | Site a large mobile unit in the car park at the Hungry Horse Public House. |
| 6. | Lodge | RDL Grove Wood School | Move the polling station from the school building to the Oak Tree Children's Centre which has been built on the school grounds. |

REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES 2010/2011**Wards remaining unchanged**

| No. | Ward |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Ashingdon and Canewdon |
| 2. | Barling and Sutton |
| 3. | Downhall and Rawreth |
| 4. | Foulness & Great Wakering |
| 5. | Hawkwell North |
| 6. | Hawkwell South |
| 7. | Hockley Central |
| 8. | Hockley North |
| 9. | Hockley West |
| 10. | Rochford |
| 11. | Sweyne Park |
| 12. | Trinity |
| 13. | Wheatley |
| 14. | Whitehouse |