

POLLING PLACES & POLLING SCHEME FOR 2019

REPORT OF: SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
Contact Officer: Terry Stanley, Business Unit Leader – Democratic Services
Email: Terry.Stanley@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477415
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
30 January 2019

Purpose of Report

1. To ask the Council to agree the polling districts that lie outside the council wards for any electoral events that arise in 2019.

Summary

2. Designation of polling districts and polling places is the responsibility of Council. A polling scheme was agreed by the Council on 26 March 2014 following a compulsory polling places review.
3. The situation of polling stations is the sole responsibility of the Returning Officer within the polling districts but Council has to agree those polling districts outside the council ward.

Recommendations

4. **The polling places for all polling districts be defined as the entire District Council ward in which the polling district is situated, with the following exceptions:**
 - (a) **Polling Place for Polling District BAC in Ashurst Wood Ward be designated East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead;**
 - (b) **Polling Place for Polling District BCF in Herontye Ward be designated East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead;**
 - (c) **Polling Place for Polling District FCB in High Weald Ward be designated King Edward Hall, High Street, Lindfield;**
 - (d) **Polling Place for Polling District IE in Cuckfield Ward be designated Ashenground Community Centre, Vale Road, Haywards Heath.**
 - (e) **Polling Place for Polling District KEE in Dunstall Ward be designated St Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Burgess Hill;**
 - (f) **Polling Place for Polling District KFB in Victoria Ward be designated St Wilfrid's Parish Hall, Station Road, Burgess Hill; and**
 - (g) **Polling Place for Polling District HBB in Haywards Heath Franklands Ward be designated the Baptist Church, Sussex Road, Haywards Heath.**

Background

5. A compulsory polling places review was carried out in 2014 and its recommendations were agreed by Council on 26 March 2014.
6. An interim, informal review of polling place facilities was carried out by Electoral Services in late 2017 which concluded that most stations remain suitable and available for use, with the following exceptions:
 - 6.1 In polling district KC the Sydney West Centre replaced Marle Place in 2018.
 - 6.2 In polling district KFA the Kings Centre replaced the Cherry Tree Centre in 2018.
7. Council is asked to agree the polling stations lying outside the polling districts. These polling stations are familiar to the electorate and close to the respective wards.

Definitions

8. A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a local authority into smaller parts. A UK Parliamentary constituency is made up of a number of polling districts, whilst an un-warded parish is normally comprised of a single polling district. Wards of Mid Sussex District Council are comprised of between one and six polling districts, depending on the parish arrangements below them. In total there are 63 polling districts within the district.
9. A polling place is a defined area in which polling station(s) for the polling district can be allocated by the Retuning Officer. It can be as small as a single building, or cover a wider area allowing for the relocation of a polling station should the usual facilities become unavailable. Some authorities define the entire polling district as a polling place to allow for maximum flexibility in this matter.
10. A polling station is the room or area of the polling place in which voting is conducted.

Roles and Responsibilities

11. The Local Authority.

Every relevant local authority in Great Britain is responsible for dividing its area into polling districts and designating polling places for each polling district. The authority must review these arrangements at least once every five years and determine whether amendments are required as a result.

12. The Electoral Registration Officer.

If any amendments to polling districts are made by the local authority the Electoral Registration Officer must ensure that the Register of Electors is amended accordingly and publish a notice to that effect.

Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review

13. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission completed its review of parliamentary boundaries 5 September 2018 and has reported its final recommendations to Government. Their final recommendations are published at www.bce2018.org.uk

Policy Context.

14. Electoral Services completed a polling places review in 2014 in accordance with the statutory requirements. The next compulsory polling places review will be conducted after the 2019 local government elections in accordance with provisions of The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. This will invite input from all political stakeholders, registered electors and others.

Other Options Considered

15. It has not been possible to identify suitable polling stations in all the polling districts.

Financial Implications

16. A reduction in the number of polling stations will result in a decrease in the costs of venue hire and Returning Officer staff. However this is likely to be partially offset by an increase in the number of postal voters in some polling districts, increasing postage and processing costs. The proposals in this report do not reduce the number of polling stations.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

17. All polling stations are checked for disabled access.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Mid Sussex Polling Scheme 2019