

8. ALLOCATION OF POLLING STATIONS OUTSIDE POLLING DISTRICTS 2017

REPORT OF: Head of Regulatory Services & Solicitor to the Council
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council 1st February 2017

Purpose of Report

1. To ask the Council to agree the polling districts that lay outside the council wards for elections in 2017.

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 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 BCF in Herontye Ward be designated East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead;**
 - (b) **Polling Place for Polling District BAC in Ashurst Wood Ward be designated East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead;**
 - (c) **Polling Place for Polling District BD2 in Baldwins Ward be designated Halsford Park CP School, Manor Road, East Grinstead**
 - (d) **Polling Place for Polling District KFB in Victoria Ward be designated the St Wilfrid's Parish Hall, Station Road, Burgess Hill;**
 - (e) **Polling Place for Polling District FCB in High Weald Ward be designated King Edward Hall, High Street, Lindfield;**
 - (f) **Polling Place for Polling District KEE in Dunstall Ward be designated St Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Burgess Hill; and**
 - (g) **Polling Place for Polling District KDB in Meeds Ward be designated the St. Edward the Confessor Church, Royal George Road, Burgess Hill. Polling**
 - (h) **Place for Polling District IE in Cuckfield Ward be designated Ashenground Community Centre, Vale Road, Haywards Heath.**

Background

5. A polling places review was carried out in 2014 and its recommendations were agreed by Council on 26 March 2014. The next review will begin in August 2017.
6. Council is asked to agree the polling stations lying outside the polling districts. These polling stations are within walking distance for the electorate concerned. The move from St Mary's Church Hall, Windmill Lane to Halsford Park CP School, Manor Road for a small part of the electorate is owing to part of Baldwins Ward being in a different County Council Electoral division. All polling places are within their County divisions.
7. The 2016 Local Government Boundary Commission review of West Sussex County Council resulted in changes to parish wards and county council electoral divisions. These changes are highlighted yellow within the Appendix to this report.

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 65 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 four 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 Boundary Commission has begun a review of parliamentary boundaries the outcome of which is expected to be laid before parliament in 2018.

Policy Context.

14. Electoral Services completed a polling places review in 2014 in accordance with the statutory requirements.

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. Some rural polling stations have electorates less than 500 which could be more cost effectively combined with neighbouring polling districts. However, previous proposals to combine such polling districts have met with local opposition. 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 and against the size of the in-person electorate.

Appendix 1 – West Sussex County Council Election Polling Stations on 4th May 2017