

Subject:	Partial Review of Polling District and Polling Places 2018		
Date of Meeting:	6 December 2018		
Report of:	Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law (Monitoring Officer)		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Michael Appleford	Tel: 01273 291997
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Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards);		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report deals with a partial review of polling places within the City of Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 The council is required to keep all polling districts and polling places under review. This partial review seeks to improve polling place provisions informed by recent election feedback from the Returning Officer, polling station staff, polling station inspectors and electors.
- 1.3 Issues have arisen at several of the council's designated polling stations, making a review necessary in Hollingdean & Stanmer, Patcham, Hove Park and Central Hove wards
- 1.4 A consultation on proposed changes started on 15 October and ended on 29 October 2019. Respondents were invited to provide alternative venues for polling places. This report addresses the issues raised in the responses and makes recommendations for revised polling arrangements to be implemented
- 1.5 This partial review is additional to the full statutory review of all polling districts and polling places, which is a requirement. This will be carried out in autumn 2019 (and completed prior to the deadline of 31 January 2020), with any changes to be put in place prior to the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee approves the following:
 - (a) that St Mary Magdalen Church Hall be used as a polling place for GU district in Hollingdean & Stanmer ward.
 - (b) that a temporary polling place at the junction of Carden Hill and Lyminster Avenue be used as a polling place for HZ district in Patcham ward - if Hollingbury Library is unavailable.

- (c) that the OX polling district in Hove Park is split into two new smaller polling districts across Hove Park and the junction of Nevill Road and Nevill Avenue – named OX and OW.
 - (d) that Brighton & Hove Cricket Pavilion, Nevill Sport Ground is used as the polling place for the new OW district in Hove Park ward.
 - (e) that Bishop Hannington Youth & Community Hall is used as the polling place for the revised OX district in Hove Park ward.
 - (f) that Hove Town Hall be used as a polling place for UY district in Central Hove ward.
- 2.2 That the Executive Lead – Strategy Governance and Law, acting following consultation with the Council’s Returning Officer be authorised to take measures, as required by law, required to bring the changes indicated in para 2.1 above into effect.
- 2.3 That the Committee delegates to the Returning Officer, following consultation with the Group Leaders and respective ward councillors, authority to designate one or more alternative polling places in the event of any polling place not being available.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.
- 3.2 The principles underlying the council’s approach to polling districts and polling places are:
- a) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate.
 - b) To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
 - c) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
 - d) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Across Brighton & Hove there are a limited number of alternative venues for situating polling stations. Visits were undertaken to all polling districts affected by changes in this report to ascertain whether there were any other suitable venues. Other than the sites proposed, no other sites met the requirements of the Returning Officer.
- 4.2 The public consultation process outlined in point 5.1 indicated that there was broad agreement with the proposed changes. 35 per cent or more of respondents tended to or strongly agreed with the proposals. Three objections

were received to the proposals. The Returning Officer's responses to these are outlined in Appendix 2.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation period for this review ran from 15 October to 29 October 2018. Public notice of the review was given, and information about the review made available on the council's website and on the council's consultation portal. Any elector in the Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies was entitled to make representations.
- 5.2 The consultation paper, together with maps of each ward showing the polling district boundaries, can still be viewed on the council's website at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/voting-and-elections/partial-polling-place-and-polling-district-review>.
- 5.3 Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties and other interested groups or persons were also consulted.
- 5.4 Some further suggestions for change were received in response to the consultation. These are summarised in Appendix 2 along with an analysis of the respondents' agreement or disagreement with the proposals.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council is required to designate suitable polling places for electors to cast their vote at and satisfy the Returning Officer's requirements. The proposed changes provide more than satisfactory arrangements and this is demonstrated through the results of the recent consultation. Approval of these changes will allow the Returning Officer to continue their preparations for the 2 May 2019 local elections.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The proposed changes outlined in section 2.1 of the report, and other costs including officer time in arranging the changes, are expected to stay within existing resource levels

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis

Date: 12/11/18

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Under sections 18A to 18E of the Representation of the People Act 1983 as amended by the Electoral Registration Act 2006, local councils are required to keep the designation of polling places as well as polling districts under review. In doing so they must act so as to give all electors in their area such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

- 7.3 The Policy Resources & Growth Committee is the Council body with delegated authority to exercise the Council's functions in relation to electoral matters.

Lawyer Consulted:

Victoria Simpson

Date: 13/11/2018

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The council must ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practical, every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to people who are disabled.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 There are no implications.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 There are no other significant implications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Partial Review of Brighton & Hove Polling Districts and Places Consultation Paper and (Acting) Returning Officer Comment
2. Responses to the Partial Review of Brighton & Hove Polling Districts and Places Consultation Paper and (Acting) Returning Officer Comment

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Electoral Commission – Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Guidance:
https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/word_doc/0020/161633/Polling-district-review-guidance.doc