

Brighton & Hove City Council

ANNEX 1 TO OFFICER URGENCY DECISION RECORD 23/11/23

Subject: Full Review of Polling Districts 2023/24

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Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report deals with the statutory review of polling districts within Brighton & Hove. The Council is required undertake a full review of polling districts within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.
- 1.2 A significant review took place in 2022 following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Review of the city's wards. This review predominately reconfirms the 2022 scheme - making changes only when necessary.
- 1.3 A consultation on proposed changes took place between 1 and 31 October 2023. Respondents were invited to provide comments and alternatives. The consultation covered both the polling districts and polling places review. However, this report for officer decision relates solely to the polling district review. A separate report relating to polling places will be taken to SFCR Committee on 7th December.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Chief Executive agrees the polling district scheme outlined in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Chief Executive authorises the Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources to take all measures as are necessary or incidental, as required by law, to implement the changes indicated in para 2.1.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts for UK Parliamentary elections. It must keep these arrangements under review and undertake a full review of all polling districts (and polling places) within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.

- 3.2 The (Acting) Returning Officer is responsible for administering parliamentary elections. At Brighton & Hove this is the Chief Executive. The (Acting) Returning Officer must be consulted and comment on polling district reviews.
- 3.3 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) completed their review of parliamentary constituencies in July 2023. This review split a polling district in Hanover & Elm Grove ward between Brighton Pavilion and Brighton Kemptown & Peacehaven constituencies respectively. The new polling district scheme must allow for parliamentary elections to take place on the current constituency boundaries until the next general election - when the new boundaries will be used.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 A scheme and consultation document were published (see Appendix 2) and consulted on during October.
- 4.2 One comment was received regarding the polling district boundaries in Woodingdean with alternative boundaries put forward. The Returning Officer agreed with these proposals, and they have been incorporated into the scheme.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The consultation period for this review, combined with the polling places review, ran from 1 to 31 October 23. Public notice of the review was given, and information about the review was made available on the Council's website and on the Council's consultation portal. Electors residing in the Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies were invited to make representations. Hard copies of the consultation document were available on request.
- 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: [2023 Full Review of Brighton & Hove Polling Districts and Places Consultation Paper and \(Acting\) Returning Officer Comment \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/2023-Full-Review-of-Brighton-&-Hove-Polling-Districts-and-Places-Consultation-Paper-and-(Acting)-Returning-Officer-Comment)
- 5.3 Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties and a significant number of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion groups were sent the consultation documents for feedback.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council is required to split their parliamentary constituencies into polling districts and satisfy the (Acting) Returning Officer's requirements. The proposed changes provide more than satisfactory arrangements. Approval of these changes will allow the Returning Officer to continue their preparations for elections and referendums.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no material financial implications arising from the boundaries of polling districts. Any costs arising would be related to polling places/stations and would be expected to be met within existing resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda Date consulted: 23/11/2023

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 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 districts under review.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted: 23/11/2023

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Council is required to have due regard to its public sector equality duties (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) in the exercise of all its functions. Advancing equality of opportunity by ensuring that steps are taken to facilitate the electorate's exercise of their right to vote is a clear imperative. As a result, the Council must ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practical, every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible.
- 9.2 The consultation document along with an email encouraging a response was sent to the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion teams list of public contacts. This included Possibility People, a local charity set up to support and involve disabled people in issues affecting their lives.
- 9.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken and where impacts are identified mitigating actions and adjustments are being considered.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 None identified

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. [Brighton & Hove Polling District Scheme \[Final\]](#)
2. Full Review of Brighton & Hove Polling Districts and Places: Consultation Paper and (Acting) Returning Officer Comment