

Subject:	Polling Place Review		
Date of Meeting:	15 November 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Resources		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Paul Holloway	Tel: 29-2005
	Email:	paul.holloway@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	East Brighton; Withdean		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 A full review of polling districts and polling places, which comprised a formalised series of measures involving consultation, representations and publishing of information, was carried out in the autumn of 2010. Under the Electoral Administration Act 2006, the Council must carry out such a review at least every four years.
- 1.2 Following the City Council elections, issues have arisen about two of the Council's designated polling stations.
- 1.3 Withdean Ward - Governors and parents have raised concerns about the use of Westdene Primary School, as the closure of the school on polling day is disruptive to children's education.
- 1.4 East Brighton Ward – The Whitehawk Youth Centre is being demolished, so alternative premises will need to be designated as a polling place.
- 1.5 A public consultation was launched on 21 September 2011 and ended on 12 October 2012, inviting views on alternative venues for polling places.
- 1.6 This report addresses the responses and makes recommendations for revised polling arrangements to be implemented henceforth.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Governance Committee approves that the polling place for IW polling district, Withdean Ward, be changed from Westdene Primary School to the Ascension Church Hall.
- 2.2 That the Governance Committee approves that the Whitehawk Inn Training Centre be designated the new polling place for DU polling district, East Brighton Ward.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 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 and other elections. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. .
- 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 or inconvenient.
 - b) To ensure, as far as practicable, that any new 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. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation period for this review ran from 21 September to 12 October 2011. Public notice of the review was given, and information about the review made available on the Council's website. Any elector in the relevant constituencies was entitled to make representations.
- 4.2 Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties, and other interested groups or persons were also consulted.
- 4.3 The consultation paper, together with maps of the affected wards showing the polling district boundaries, can still be viewed on the Council's [polling place review](#) webpage. For reference, the consultation paper is reproduced at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 Few responses have been received. The governors at Westdene Primary School have confirmed their unanimous support for seeking alternatives, and there have been responses in favour of Westdene Library. There is however more support for the Ascension Church Hall to be used as a Polling station in Westdene Ward. The Whitehawk Inn Training Centre has affirmed that they are positive about being used as a polling station in East Brighton Ward.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The change of polling places will mean a minimal impact in hire costs.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date: 17/10/11

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 This polling pace review has been conducted in accordance with the applicable legislation, namely:
- (i) section 18C and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and
 - (ii) The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2965)

Lawyer Consulted:

Oliver Dixon

Date: 12/10/11

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 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:

- 5.4 There are no implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 There are no implications.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 There are no implications.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are no implications.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The recommendations are in line with council priorities, specifically for open and effective city leadership.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 In both Westdene and East Brighton Wards, alternative venues were considered, or suggestions for alternative venues were invited.. The consultation exercise produced feedback to the electoral Services office. Whilst there was support in Westdene Ward for Westdene Library, more support was eventually received for the recommended Ascension Church Hall. In East Brighton Ward, there was a positive response from the Whitehawk Inn Training Centre, and the venue has not been opposed with no other alternative venues receiving support.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The consultation exercise has produced records of support by the majority of individuals / groups responding to the consultation exercise. It is for this reason that both Ascension Hall in Westdene Ward and the Whitehawk Inn in East Brighton Ward are made.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Consultation document – review of polling places, autumn 2011

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Consultation Paper – 21 September 2011.
2. Consultation responses – file held by Electoral Services
3. Electoral Commission Circular EC19/2010 – Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations