

Report to Governance Committee

18th October 2018

By the Chief Executive

DECISION REQUIRED



**Horsham
District
Council**

Not Exempt

Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

Executive Summary

In accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006, local authorities have a duty to review polling districts, polling places and polling stations in their area at least every four years. The last review took place in 2014 so a review has been conducted this year which has to be completed by 1st December 2018.

In addition, it is also necessary to carry out a review this year to accommodate the changes to Horsham District wards which take effect from May 2019.

The consultation process is now complete and the recommendations are outlined in the attached schedule.

Recommendations

That the Committee recommends Council to approve the revised schedule of polling districts and polling places following the review carried out this year.

Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure that polling districts, polling places and polling stations are relevant and fit for purpose.

Background Papers

Schedule of polling districts, places and stations
Responses to consultation.

Wards affected: All.

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to review polling districts and polling places and in its area at least every four years. At the same time the Returning Officer reviews the polling stations. As the last review took place in 2014, a review has been conducted this year.
- 1.2 In addition, the review this year has also taken into account the changes to Horsham District wards which take effect from May 2019.
- 1.3 If approved, the changes will take effect from 1st December 2018 when the electoral register is published following the annual canvass.

2 Relevant Statutory and Council policy

- 2.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires local authorities to review polling districts and places at least every 4 years. Other relevant legislation includes the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Parliamentary and Constituencies Act 1986.

3 Details

- 3.1 The review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the Horsham area began on 2nd July 2018 and closed on 7th September 2018.
- 3.2 The Notice of Review and schedule of existing polling districts and places were published on the Council's website on 2nd July 2018. At the same time District and County councillors, parish and neighbourhood councils and party agents were advised of the review and their comments sought.
- 3.3 The first consultation stage closed on 31st July 2018 and the schedule was republished on 9th August 2018, incorporating the responses received and the Returning Officer's comments, for a second period of consultation. The second consultation stage ended on 7th September 2018.
- 3.4 Following the second consultation stage the schedule has been updated to take account of the Returning Officer's response to the further comments received.
- 3.5 There is one change from the existing schedule:
 - The room used for a polling station at St Andrews CofE Primary School in Nuthurst is no longer available for use. In addition, this was not an ideal location as portable external lighting was required for safe access purposes and the mobile phone signal is poor making communication between polling station staff and the elections team difficult. There are no other suitable premises in the vicinity and electors for this area will therefore now vote at Mannings Heath Village Hall and the polling districts combined for administrative purposes. Affected electors will be advised of the option to vote by post.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 If approved, the new polling districts will be implemented upon publication of the register on 1st December 2018, following the annual canvass.

5 Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out in two stages, as set out in Section 3 above, and comments received incorporated where appropriate.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 None.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are no financial consequences arising from the proposals in this report.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 The Council is required under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 to carry out a review at least every four years.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 A risk assessment including the use of polling places is updated for each election.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 The proposals will have no detrimental impact on human rights or sustainability. There will always be a need for some electors to use private transport to access their polling station and for those who are not able to do so alternative methods are available (e.g. postal and proxy voting). In administering all elections the Returning Officer has regard to the need to consider equality and diversity issues. The accessibility of polling places is constantly reviewed and whenever possible fully accessible premises are used.