

# Report to Governance Committee

26 November 2019

By the Chief Executive

**DECISION REQUIRED**



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Not Exempt

## Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations

### Executive Summary

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 requires a review of all polling districts and polling places to be completed by 31 January 2020. Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2018.

A major review of polling districts and polling places was undertaken last year to take account of the new District wards introduced with effect from May 2019. For this reason few changes to polling places and no changes to polling districts are proposed in the current review. An additional mini-review will be conducted prior to the May 2020 elections to take account of any issues arising from the forthcoming Parliamentary General election.

The consultation process in respect of the current review is now complete and the recommendations are set out in Appendix 3.

### Recommendations

- (i) That the Committee **recommends** Council to approve the revised schedule of polling districts, polling places and polling stations, as set out in Appendix 3, following the review carried out this year.
- (ii) That it be noted that an additional mini-review will be conducted prior to the May 2020 elections to take account of any issues arising from the forthcoming Parliamentary General election.

### 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.

**Contact:** Lesley Morgan, Democratic Services Manager 01403 215123

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to complete a review of polling districts and polling places in its area by 31 January 2020, with subsequent compulsory reviews undertaken every five years. At the same time the Returning Officer reviews the polling stations.
- 1.2 If approved, the changes will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 and the electoral register will be republished to incorporate any changes, if required.

### **2 Relevant Statutory and Council policy**

- 2.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2013 requires a review of all polling districts and polling places to be completed by 31 January 2020. Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2018. 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 24 September 2019 and closed on 11 November 2019.
- 3.2 The Notice of Review and schedule of existing polling districts and places were published on the Council's website on 24 September 2019. At the same time District and County councillors, parish and neighbourhood councils, local MPs and party agents were advised of the review and their comments sought.
- 3.3 The schedule was republished on 14 October 2019, incorporating the Returning Officer's comments (Appendix 1). The consultation period ended on 11 November 2019 and details of responses received have been published on the website.
- 3.4 There is one change to polling places/polling stations from the existing schedule:
  - The polling place/station for polling district HLSC (Kilnwood Vale) will now be Kilnwood Vale Primary School, which is more convenient for electors than the previous polling station at Faygate Village Hall.
- 3.5 No changes to polling districts are proposed. As noted in the executive summary, these were comprehensively reviewed only a year ago to take account of the introduction of new District wards from May 2019.
- 3.6 As stated above, the current compulsory review must be completed by 31 January 2020. However, in view of the forthcoming snap Parliamentary General election, an additional mini-review will be conducted prior to the May 2020 elections to take account of any issues arising from this election.

- 3.7 With regard to the local Member's and Parish Council's comments in respect of Nuthurst parish, at the review last year it was noted that the room used for a polling station at St Andrews CofE Primary School in Nuthurst was 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. An alternative venue, Copsale Hall, was suggested at the time but this does not meet the requirements for disabled access. It was therefore agreed by the Council that electors for this area would vote at Mannings Heath Village Hall and the polling districts would be combined for administrative purposes. At the local elections this year, the first time Nuthurst residents had been required to vote at Mannings Heath, turnout for the Nuthurst & Lower Beeding ward was the third highest in the District at 41.87% and no adverse comments were received from electors regarding the change. It should be noted that a number of parishes of this size and larger have only one polling station/place (e.g. Ashington, Itchingfield, Rudgwick, Slinfold, Steyning, Thakeham, Warnham, West Chiltington) so this is not an unusual situation. It is therefore proposed that the existing arrangements, as agreed last year, remain unchanged.
- 3.8 Details of all responses received and the local authority/Returning Officer's comments are attached (Appendix 2).

## **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 If approved, the polling districts, polling places and polling stations set out in Appendix 3 will be implemented with effect from 1 January 2020.

## **5 Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out 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 2013 to carry out a review at least every five 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.