

**TO: EXECUTIVE
3 JULY 2018**

**POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW 2018
Director of Resources – Democratic and Registration Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposals of the Electoral Review Steering Group for changes to Bracknell Forest's polling districts and polling places as part of a review conducted in line with the statutory processes set out in Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. Any changes will take effect with the publication of the revised register of electors on 1 December 2018. If an election was to take place prior to this date the existing polling districts and polling places would be used.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the proposals of the Electoral Review Steering Group are agreed for recommendation to Council as set out below:

That no changes are made to the existing polling arrangements for the following wards:

Ward	Polling Districts
Ascot	WX; WY
Central Sandhurst	SP
Crown Wood	BF; WW
Crowthorne	CN
Great Hollands North	BH; BQ
Great Hollands South	BJ
Hanworth	BD; BK
Harmans Water	BL; BLP; WV
Little Sandhurst and Wellington	CS; SQ
Old Bracknell	BM; BN
Owlsmoor	SJ
Priestwood and Garth	BG; BP
Winkfield and Cranbourne	WN; WP; WS; WZ

- 2.2 That the following changes are made to the Binfield with Warfield Ward:
- i. Separate the southern area of the existing 'BA' polling district into a new polling district to be called 'BI'. Shown in Annexe A – Fig 1.

- ii. Separate the Amen Corner development from the 'BA' polling district and creating a new polling district to be called 'BAC'. Shown in Annexe A – Fig 1.
- iii. Designate Newbold College as the polling station for the 'BI' new polling district.
- iv. Designate Farley Wood Community Centre is designated as the polling station for polling district 'BAC' with the electors for that polling district using the main hall at the Community Centre.
- v. That Binfield Memorial Hall remains the polling station for the revised 'BA' polling district.
- vi. That Farley Wood Community centre remains the polling station for the unchanged 'BB' polling district with the electors concerned continuing to vote in the "Meeting Room" at the Community Centre
- vii. That no changes are made to either polling districts 'BB' or 'WM', retaining existing polling arrangements.

2.3 That the following change is made to the Bullbrook Ward:

- i. That one additional polling station is created at Bullbrook Community Centre to increase capacity at this polling place and reduce pressure on the two existing polling stations.

2.4 That the following change is made to the College Town Ward:

- i. Designate the main sports hall at Sandhurst Secondary School as the default polling station for electors in polling district 'SO'. Should a scheduled exam clash with a polling day the existing arrangements at College Town Infants School would be reinstated.

2.6 That the following changes are made to the Warfield Harvest Ride Ward:

- i. Create a new polling district named 'WE' by splitting the existing 'WG' polling district into two areas. Fig. 2 in Annexe A shows this.
- ii. Designate Westmoreland Pavilion as the polling station for the proposed 'WE' polling district.
- iii. That voters in the revised 'WG' polling district continue to vote at Warfield Community centre which would be a single polling station.
- iv. That voters in the unchanged 'WQ' polling district continue to vote at Warfield Community Centre.

2.7 That the following change is made to the Wildridings and Central Ward:

- i. Designate the former Magistrates Court as the polling station for 'BT' electors for the 2019 elections.
- ii. That subject to a re-evaluation by the Steering Group after planned renovation work, for all subsequent polls, Bracknell Central Library is designated as the polling station.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The proposals seek to update the current polling arrangements to ensure that all polling districts, places and stations are suitable for the next borough wide elections in May 2019.
- 3.2 All proposals are made with the intention to balance the number of electors within each polling district; to ensure that polling places are convenient and easily accessible for voters and that polling arrangements have capacity to absorb future demand arising from new residential property developments.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Electoral Review Steering Group considered a number of potential locations to replace polling stations that were no longer suitable or available taking consideration of representations made by a number of stakeholders as part of the formal consultation process that ran from September to November 2017 – Shown in Annexe B.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to undertake a review of the polling arrangements every five years.
- 5.2 The last full review of polling arrangements was concluded in 2014.
- 5.3 Since the 2014 review there have been four borough wide polls and six local by-elections which have resulted in a number of comments and queries from various stakeholders around the continued suitability of some polling stations. As such it was determined that a full review should be undertaken prior to the next borough wide poll in May 2019. This is in addition to the next compulsory review which must still be undertaken between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020. While this must follow the same statutory processes, because we will have just conducted a detailed analysis of the boroughs polling arrangements, this should only need to be a 'light touch' review with the added benefit of formally capturing lessons and feedback from the May 2019 elections.

Polling districts

- 5.4 A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area i.e. a Borough Ward, a Parish/ Town Council or Parish/ Town Council ward. It is the smallest unit of an electoral area. Polling districts cannot include more than one of either a Parish/ Town ward, a Parish/ Town Council or a Borough ward, which

Polling place

- 5.5 A polling place is an area or building in which polling stations will be selected by the relevant Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.

Polling station

- 5.6 A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.

Method undertaken to conduct the review

- 5.7 The review was carried out by Officers in line with the responsibilities required of them under the guidance of the Electoral Commission.
- 5.8 The Electoral Review Steering Group met twice to discuss the proposals and membership consisted of Cllr Dale Birch, Cllr Ian Leake, Cllr Mrs Mary Temperton and Cllr Chris Turrell (Chair).
- 5.9 Members provided comments on the proposals at the first steering group meeting. Subsequently, Officers investigated and updated the proposals to reflect the results of this feedback. Officers presented the updated proposals at the second steering group meeting and members unanimously endorsed these. A third meeting was scheduled to take place but, as all proposals were accepted, this was cancelled.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal implications are addressed within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The establishment of additional polling stations will involve additional costs for staffing and hire of accommodation.
- 6.3 Any increased costs at the time of an election would be realised by the body responsible for paying for the particular election.
- 6.4 For the next Borough and Parish elections due to take place in May 2019 it is estimated that these additional costs will be around £3,750 This is comprised of £2200 additional staffing, £600 hire costs, £200 single use equipment and £750 reusable equipment. Where there is a contested parish/ town election these costs will be shared equally.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.5 Equalities Impact Assessment is integrated within the review of each proposal to the scheme.
- 6.6 Polling stations are regularly reviewed to ensure maximum accessibility and various methods of voting are promoted to enable access for all. Polling equipment and facilities are available in every Station to assist voters with disabilities.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.7 Failure to complete the review would result in the Council being in breach of its statutory duty.

Other Officers

- 6.8 None

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Initial proposals were drawn up by Electoral Services on behalf of the Returning Officer, published and circulated to interested parties on 11 September 2017.
- 7.2 Bracknell Forest's online consultation portal, e-mail to all stakeholders including elected members, candidates, agents, head teachers, parish and election staff.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Newsletters and e-mails sent to all local charities and voluntary groups in the borough via Involve, a local organisation that supports local charities and community groups.

Representations Received

- 7.3 A total of 27 representations were received concerning 13 polling locations. These are shown in Annexe B.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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