

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 4 OCTOBER 2011

Title:

POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING STATION REVIEW

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires a polling district and polling station review be carried out every 4 years and for our polling stations to be kept under constant review. The last review was carried out in 2007.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

An active democratic process which involves as many electors as possible is central to supporting all of the Council's priorities.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

Waverley needs to ensure that polling stations are accessible to all electors.

Environment and Climate Change Implications:

Waverley aims to provide polling stations within walking distance of as many electors as possible.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

The review has been carried out within existing staffing resources and budgets.

There may be a small budget implication for future Waverley elections as the cost of hall hire is generally higher than the cost of schools, who are only allowed, under legislation, to charge for heating and lighting.

Legal Implications:

Waverley is under an obligation to carry out periodic reviews of its polling stations.

Background

1. The Council is required to keep all polling districts and polling stations under continuous review to ensure it responds to any changes or difficulties with polling stations. The aim is to encourage turnout at all types of elections.
2. Polling Station Inspectors visit polling stations on all election days and complete a polling station suitability checklist which identifies any issues that need addressing. Presiding Officers are also asked to check that stations are accessible on polling day and any issues reported.

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3. The consultation process required under the review has now been carried out and all interested parties and organisations have been consulted.
4. Housing forecasts from Planning have been obtained and there are no very large residential developments proposed in the Borough over the next four years which could produce distortions to polling districts or the need for new polling places.
5. There have been no observations from members of the public, political parties or Councillors.
6. There are three polling places where there have been continual issues, which are Charterhouse Scouts Hut, Godalming and Beacon Hill Primary School, Hindhead , where parking is an issue for both and St Peter's School, Farnham which has to be used for both Boundstone and Shortheath voters as there is no suitable venue in Boundstone. All of these are long established polling places in areas where there are no alternative venues, despite officers researching alternatives.
7. However, the Returning Officer had previously been asked to find an alternative to St Mary's School in Frensham by the Headteacher of the school.
8. Frensham now has a new community shop which includes the Parish Council office and meeting room above and Kate Shipton, the Parish Clerk, has offered Waverley the use of this room for election purposes.
9. The room is fully accessible for disabled electors, with a lift to take them to the first floor and there is adequate parking to the front and side of the building.

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to recommend to the Council that:

1. the Frensham Parish community building be designated as the polling place for the Frensham polling district; and

2. as there are no suitable alternatives for the other stations identified in paragraph 6 above, no other changes be made but officers keep them under review in case new alternative buildings become available.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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Committees\Executive\2011-12\041011\010 polling station