

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5 FEBRUARY 2013

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Title:

**REVIEW OF PARTICULAR POLLING PLACES**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Robert Knowles]**

**[Wards Affected: Farnham Upper Hale, Bramley Busbridge and Hascombe,  
Farnham Bourne South, Godalming Charterhouse, Witley and Hambledon,  
Frensham, Docketfield and Tilford]**

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Summary and purpose:

In the lead up to and following the conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections on 16 November 2012, a number of enquiries and some complaints were received regarding the use by Waverley of certain polling stations within the Borough. As a result it is recommended that a review be conducted of particular polling stations within the Borough.

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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 the Council's corporate priorities.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

Waverley is required to seek to ensure that all electors in the Borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances. Waverley must ensure that each polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.

Environment and Climate Change Implications:

Despite the increase in postal voting, the majority of electors still vote in person at polling stations. Waverley aims to ensure that polling stations are provided, wherever possible, in walking distance for the majority of electors.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

This review has been conducted without the need for any additional staff or financial resources.

In the event of any change of polling station use from a school to hall or other community facility, there would be an increase in the cost of venue hire to be met from elections fees. This is because publicly funded schools may be used as polling places free of a hire charge. The only requirement is to pay running costs including heating and lighting, together with any extra caretaking costs required on polling day.

## **Legal Implications:**

Waverley has a legal responsibility, pursuant to Section 18 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places every four years. The last full review was conducted in 2011. This does not preclude a review being conducted of a particular polling place or district at any time.

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## **Background**

1. In England, each parish is required by law to be a separate polling district, unless there are special circumstances.

### **Hale School, Upper Hale Road, Farnham, GU9 6LR – Farnham Upper Hale Ward**

2. Complaints have been received regarding the use of Hale School as a polling place. This is due to the disruption caused to pupils and the impact on parents and carers required to make arrangements for childcare on polling day due to the school's closure. Both the Police and Crime Commissioner (16 November 2012) and the County Council elections (2 May 2013) are being conducted within the same school year.
3. Hale School is used currently as a double polling station with a current total electorate of 3231. Enquiries have been made of suitable alternative venues. Sandy Hill Community Bungalow is available for hire within the same ward with suitable disabled access, sufficient in size to accommodate a double polling station, reasonable hire charges and good facilities for polling station staff. There is limited parking on site but parking is available on Upper Hale Road.

### **Busbridge Junior School, Brighton Road, Busbridge, GU7 1XA – Bramley Busbridge and Hascombe Ward**

4. Representations have been received from the Headmistress of Busbridge Junior School requesting that Busbridge Junior School no longer be used as a polling place. This is for the same reasons as expressed with regards to Hale School.
5. Busbridge Junior School is used currently as a single polling station with a current total electorate of 609. Enquiries have been made of Busbridge Village Hall. This facility is not available to hire in the mornings as it is used by a private nursery. There are no other known facilities in the ward that could be considered. Busbridge falls within the county division of Waverley Eastern villages together with Bramley and Hascombe polling places. An option could be to merge the Busbridge list with the Hascombe list because of the respective small electorate lists for each place. The latter has a current electorate of 216. This would have implications for those electors who currently walk to Busbridge Junior School to vote in person. In addition "special circumstances" for the change would have to be found to comply with S.18 EAA 2006 above.

**South Farnham Infants' School, School Lane, Lower Bourne, Farnham, GU10  
3PE – Farnham Bourne South Ward**

6. South Farnham Infants' School was formerly known as Bourne School. An enquiry has been received from the Headmaster regarding continued use of the school as a polling place for the same reasons as above. The school is used as a double polling station with a total electorate of 2087. The school has suggested use of a new church hall at St Thomas-on-the Bourne, Frensham Road. However this venue falls within the Farnham Bourne North ward and is opposite the Ridgeway School, currently the designated polling place for that ward. There is a total electorate of 1092 in the Bourne North ward. There are no other known facilities within the ward that could be considered.

**Scouts Hall, Charterhouse Road, Godalming – Godalming Charterhouse ward**

7. A polling station inspection of the Scouts Hall was conducted by Mary Orton, Deputy Returning Officer, on 16 November 2012, Polling Day for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election. Concern was raised regarding access to the venue for electors and the very cold facilities provided for polling station staff.
8. The Scouts Hall is used as a double polling station with a current total electorate of 2821. Enquiries are currently being made of The Armoury building within the Charterhouse School site as an alternative option for consideration.

**Chandler Junior School, Middlemarch, Roke Lane, Witley, GU8 5PB – Witley  
and Hambledon ward**

9. A request was made from a parent of children at the school prior to the November 2012 election as to continued use of the school as a polling place.
10. Chandler Junior School is a double polling station with a current total electorate of 2489. There are no other known facilities within the ward that could be considered.

**The Vestry, Dockenfield Church, The Street, Dockenfield – Frensham  
Dockenfield and Tilford ward**

11. The Vestry, Dockenfield is a single polling station with current total electorate of 337. Churt Village hall is a single polling station with electorate of 971. Frensham Parish Meeting Room, The Community Shop, Shortfield Common Road is a single polling station with electorate of 770. Tilford Institute is a double polling station with an electorate of 578 for Frensham – Rushmore and an electorate of 781 for Frensham. All fall within the county division of Waverley Western.

12. A polling station inspection of the Vestry was conducted by Mary Orton, Deputy Returning Officer, on 16 November 2012 Polling Day for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election. Concern was raised regarding the very cold facilities provided for polling station staff.

### **Conclusion**

13. Representations have been received by Waverley Borough Council with regards to the continued suitability of particular polling places within the area. The Council can conduct a review at any time of particular polling places.
14. Schedule A1 Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that if it is agreed that a review take place, Waverley must publish notice of the holding of a review. The authority must consult with the Returning Officer. The Authority must seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the Returning Officer's representations. Any elector may make representations. Representations made by any person may include proposals for specified alternative polling places. On completion of a review the authority must give reasons for its decisions in the review and publish such other information as is prescribed.
15. The review and consideration of any representations received would not be completed in time for any changes to be made for the County Council elections on 2 May 2013 bearing in mind the lead in time required for poll card printing. The timescale for a review would be as follows:-

Commencement of review – 01.03.13

Conclusion of review – 03.05.13

Consideration by Executive – 02.07.13

Consideration by Full Council – 16.07.13

Publication of result of review – 31.07.13

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended to the Council that

1. agreement be given to a review of Hale School Polling Place with a view to replacing it with Sandy Hill Community Bungalow or such other venue found to be appropriate and convenient for electors;
2. agreement be given to a review of Busbridge Junior School to either merge its electoral list with that of Hascombe or for consideration to be given to any other facility that might be offered by respondents to the review and found to be appropriate and convenient for electors;

3. agreement be given to a review of South Farnham Infants' School for consideration to be given to any other facility that might be offered by respondents to the review and found to be appropriate and convenient for electors;
4. agreement be given to a review of the Scouts Hall, Charterhouse Road for consideration to be given to any other facility that might be offered by respondents to the review and found to be appropriate and convenient for electors;
5. agreement be given to a review of the arrangements for polling places situated within the Frensham, Dockenfield and Tilford ward; and
6. the timetable for undertaking the review be approved, as set out in paragraph 15 of the report.

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### 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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