

Crawley Borough Council

	Report No: LDS/27	B
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Report to General Purposes Committee

Monday 31st January 2011

Polling District Review and Polling Arrangements 2011

1. Key Points

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the arrangements for the statutory Review of Polling Districts during 2011 and makes some recommendations for a change to the polling place for West Green in advance of the possible referendum on the Alternative Vote and Borough Council elections in May.

2. Recommendations

1. That the Polling District Review be conducted as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
2. That the polling place for West Green be changed from West Green Primary School to The Charis Centre, West Green Drive, Crawley

Ann-Maria Brown
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

3 Background

- 3.1 A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a constituency, ward or County Division into smaller parts. The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on all local authorities to divide their area into polling districts. Under the current scheme each Borough ward forms one polling district, unless voting takes place at more than one polling place, then the ward is divided in to separate polling districts. It is also necessary to create separate polling districts where County and Borough electoral areas are not co-terminus as is the case in Three Bridges and Northgate. A copy of the current scheme is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The Council is required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 to complete a Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places every four years. The first Review under this legislation was completed in 2007 therefore the Council is required to undertake a Review and implement a new polling scheme in 2011. The scheme has been kept under constant review since 2007 and the Committee has agreed some ongoing changes in the light of experience at elections and changes in circumstances.
- 3.3 The legislation gives some clear guidance on how the Review must be carried out. When designating polling districts the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in the constituency have reasonable facilities for voting, and, as far as practicable that the polling places are accessible to all electors.
- 3.4 When considering the designation of a polling place the authority must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled people. In addition the authority must seek representations from people or organisations that have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different disabilities.

4 Content

Recommended Approach

- 4.1. The legislation states that public notice of the Review must be given and it is proposed that this is done with a notice in the local press, on the Council's website and a direct invitation to make comments to local political parties, disability organisations and ward councillors. The following timetable is suggested using the draft calendar of meetings for 2011/12:

1 st March	Publish notice of Review, consult stakeholders on existing scheme
23 rd May	Deadline for comments
May/June	Development of proposed scheme/Returning Officer's comments
27 th June	Consideration of comments and proposed scheme/Returning Officer's comments by General Purposes Committee
19 th September	Deadline for comments on the proposed scheme. This stage is for representations and comments on any proposed

	changes to arrangements for polling districts and places
29 th September	Consideration of final scheme for recommendation to full Council
19 th October	Full Council considers final scheme
1 st December	Electoral Register amended to reflect new scheme

- 4.2 All existing polling places will be inspected by the Council's Access Officer with the Electoral Services Manager to identify any access issues.

5 Polling arrangements for West Green Ward

- 5.1 Polling in West Green ward has for many years taken place in West Green Primary School. The building adjacent and connected to the school, the Charis Centre (formerly part of the school site) has recently been acquired and refurbished by Crawley Community Church and is available for use as a polling place.
- 5.2 This Charis Centre offers very good, accessible facilities. Polling would take place in the main hall. As the entrance is next to the entrance to the school, potential voter confusion by the change would be avoided. The building is closer to the car park, giving easier access to those with difficulty with walking. The change would also avoid the need to close the school on polling day, which has been the subject of complaints from parents. The school is supportive of the proposed change.
- 5.3 One of the Ward Councillors for West Green has raised a concern about pedestrian safety at the start and end of the school day, in particular that children have to cross over the entrance to the car park that would serve the polling place. To help alleviate these concerns "polling station parking only" signs could be provided at the entrance to the car park from West Green Drive. The car park is shared by the Charis Centre and school staff. The school has agreed that the staff would not use the car park on polling day, and will arrange for their site manager to supervise the entrance and support their crossing patrol at pick up and drop off times
- 5.4 There are no scheduled Borough Council elections in West Green this year, but with the possibility that the Alternative Vote referendum is held, it is recommended that this change take place in advance of the review. The success of the change could then be considered when the Committee undertakes the Review in June.

6 Ward Members' Views

- 6.1 Ward Members will be consulted as part of the Review.
- 6.2 Regarding the proposed change to polling arrangements, Councillor Cumper has raised concerns about traffic safety as outlined in the report. Councillor Crane supports the change and states that polling has taken place in the building that is now the Charis Centre when it was part of the school in the past.

7 Staffing, Equalities, Financial and Legal Implications/Powers

- 7.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 sets out a duty for the Council to carry out a polling district Review every four year, that representations must be made by the Returning Officer, and that the Council must actively seek representation from persons it thinks have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with different forms of disability.
- 7.2 The Council must comply with the review process set out in sections 18A-18E and schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.
- 7.3 The Council must publish the comments that it receives in the Review.
- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed

8 Risk Implications

- 8.1 none

9 Environmental Impacts

- 9.1 none

10 Links to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Plan

10. The proposals contained in this report relate to the following key areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy

Community Cohesion	y	Community Safety	y
Young People and Children	y	Health and Well Being	n
Older People	y	The Environment	n
The Local Economy	n	Social Inclusion	y

The following key principles are applicable:-

(i) Working together	y
(ii) Dignity, respect and opportunities for all	y
(iii) Involving People	y
(iv) Making it last	y

The report relates to the following areas in which the Council operates to enhance the town and the quality of life of local people:-

(i) Prosperity	n
(ii) Community	y
(iii) Environment	n
(iv) Value for Money	y

11 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 11.1 To seek the Committee's approval for the timetable and method of the review.

12 Background Papers

Electoral Administration Act 2006
Representation of the People Act 1983

Contact Officer:- Andrew Oakley
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Bewbush Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LA	Bewbush Community Centre	Dorsten Square	6190
Broadfield North Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LB	Broadfield Youth and Community Centre	Broadfield Barton	4271
Broadfield South Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LC	Broadfield Youth and Community Centre	Broadfield Barton	4095
Furnace Green Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LD	Furnace Green Community Centre	Ashburnham Road	4225
Gossops Green Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LE	Gossops Green Community Centre	Capel Lane	3878
Ifield			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LFA	Ifield Community Centre	Ifield Drive	2703
LFB	The Mill Primary School	Ifield Drive	1630
LFC	Wybourne Community Centre	Hyde Drive	2177
Langley Green Ward			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LG	Langley Green Community Centre	Stagelands	5699
Maidenbower			
PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LHA	Maidenbower Community Centre	Harvest Road	2666
LHB	The Brook School	Salterns Road	3651

Northgate Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LIA	Northgate Community Centre	Barnfield Road	3668
LIB	Northgate Community Centre	Barnfield Road	53

Pound Hill North Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LJA	Milton Mount Primary School	Grattons Drive	2786
LJB	Wakehams Green Community Centre	Wakehams Green Drive	2117

Pound Hill South and Worth Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LKA	Pound Hill Community Centre	Worth Road	2683
LKB	St Edward the Confessor	Hillcrest Close	3538

Southgate Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LLA	St Mary's Church Hall	Wakehurst Drive	2830
LLB	Southgate West Community Centre	Ditchling Hill	3297

Three Bridges Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LMA	Montefiore Institute	Hazelwick Road	2618
LMB	Three Bridges Community Centre	Gales Place	1705
LMC	Three Bridges Community Centre	Gales Place	739

Tilgate Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LNA	Tilgate Community Centre	Shackleton Road	2162
LNB	Holy Trinity Church Hall	Titmus Drive	2310

West Green Ward

PD Letters	Polling Place	Address	Electorate
LO	West Green Primary School	West Green Drive	3510