

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Governance Committee Date of meeting 14th January 2019

Polling District Review 2018/2019 – Final Proposals

Report of the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR Services – LDS/148

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the final proposals on future polling arrangements for Crawley.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Full Council be recommended to approve the polling arrangements set out in Appendix C

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The changes to ward boundaries made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of Crawley require a review of polling arrangements in the Borough. This Review is combined with the statutory review which must be undertaken during the period between 1st October 2018 and 31st January 2020.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission have conducted a review of electoral arrangements for the Council. The Draft Statutory Instrument, The Crawley (Electoral Changes) Order 2019, containing the Commission's final recommendations for ward boundaries in Crawley, has been laid in parliament under the negative procedure. Under this process the Statutory Instrument will automatically come into effect as law unless either House stops it in a period of up to 40 days after it has been laid. The 40 day period expires on 6th February 2019.
- 4.2 The new ward boundaries are shown on the map in Appendix A and are as follows

Ward name	Number of councillors
Bewbush & Broadfield North	3
Broadfield	3
Furnace Green	2
Gossops Green & North East Broadfield	2
Ifield	3
Langley Green & Tushmore	3
Maidenbower	3
Northgate & West Green	3
Pound Hill North & Forge Wood	3

Ward name	Number of councillors
Pound Hill South & Worth	3
Southgate	3
Three Bridges	3
Tilgate	2

4.3 In addition to defining new wards for Crawley the Statutory Instrument requires

- That elections for all Councillors take place in May 2019
- That exiting councillors are to retire on the fourth day after the election in May 2019, and the newly elected councillors are to come into office on that fourth day.
- That for each ward the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes in May 2019 is the first to retire, and the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes is the next to retire.
- That the order of retirement for Wards represented by 2 Councillors are as follows:

Ward	Number to retire in 2020	Number to retire in 2022	Number to retire in 2023
Furnace Green	0	1	1
Gossops Green and North East Broadfield	1	0	1
Tilgate	1	1	0

4.4 The Council has a duty under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide the Borough into polling districts and to designate suitable polling places so as to meet the reasonable requirements of electors and take sufficient account of the accessibility of disabled persons.

4.5 The changes to ward boundaries implemented by the Boundary Commission's Review require some consequential altering of the Borough's existing polling scheme. The Electoral Register will then be republished to reflect the new polling districts and Ward Boundaries. In addition the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced compulsory review periods of 16 months beginning with 1st October 2013 and every fifth year after that.

4.6 At its meeting held on 18th September 2018 the Governance Committee agreed to combine these two processes in a single Polling District Review to be held with the following timetable:

1st October 2018 - publish notice of Review inviting comments on the suitability of existing polling arrangements

1st November 2018 – initial consultation ends

13th November 2018 – consideration by Governance Committee of the results of the consultation and proposals for a new polling scheme reflecting the final recommendations of Local Government Boundary Commission

19th November 2018 – consultation on new arrangements begins

28th December 2018 – consultation ends

14th January 2019 – Governance Committee considers final scheme for recommendation to Full Council

23rd January 2019 – Full Council considers final scheme

February 2019 – Electoral Register published to reflect new boundaries

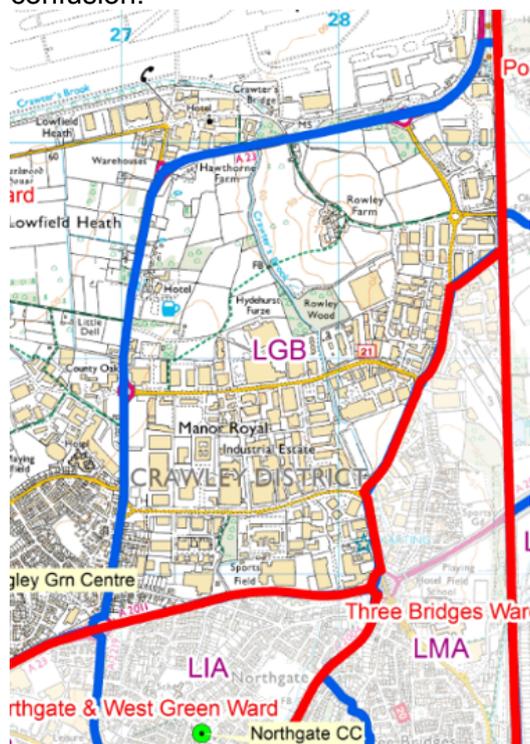
- 4.7 The existing polling scheme adopted by the Council in 2013 as amended following the review of West Sussex County Council divisions in 2016 is set out in Appendix B. The current County Council Divisions are shown at Appendix D. These boundaries need to be reflected in the polling districts scheme to enable the electoral register to be divided into County Divisions.
- 4.8 The scheme has generally been operating well, with very few issues regarding access raised. All polling stations are inspected annually for access by the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Advisor.
- 4.9 At its meeting held on 13th November the Committee considered proposals for changes to the polling scheme. Changes were agreed to the proposals in Langley Green and Tushmore Ward, Pound Hill North and Forge Ward, Three Bridges Ward and Tilgate Ward. The response of the Acting Returning Officer and comments received during the consultation period are set out below.
- 4.9 The proposed polling arrangements for recommendation to Full Council are shown in Appendix C.

5. Changes agreed by the Committee on 13th November 2018

5.1 Langley Green and Tushmore Ward

The Committee agreed that a separate polling district should be created for the area to the east of the A23 as this area is in a separate County Council division from the rest of the ward. It was also agreed that voting to be held at the Northgate Community Centre to avoid a change of polling place for these electors.

The Acting Returning Officer comments that this proposal will result in voting for two wards taking place at the Northgate Community Centre, but this can be accommodated within the building and at Borough Council elections the two wards will be allocated contrasting coloured ballot papers to reduce the possibility of confusion.



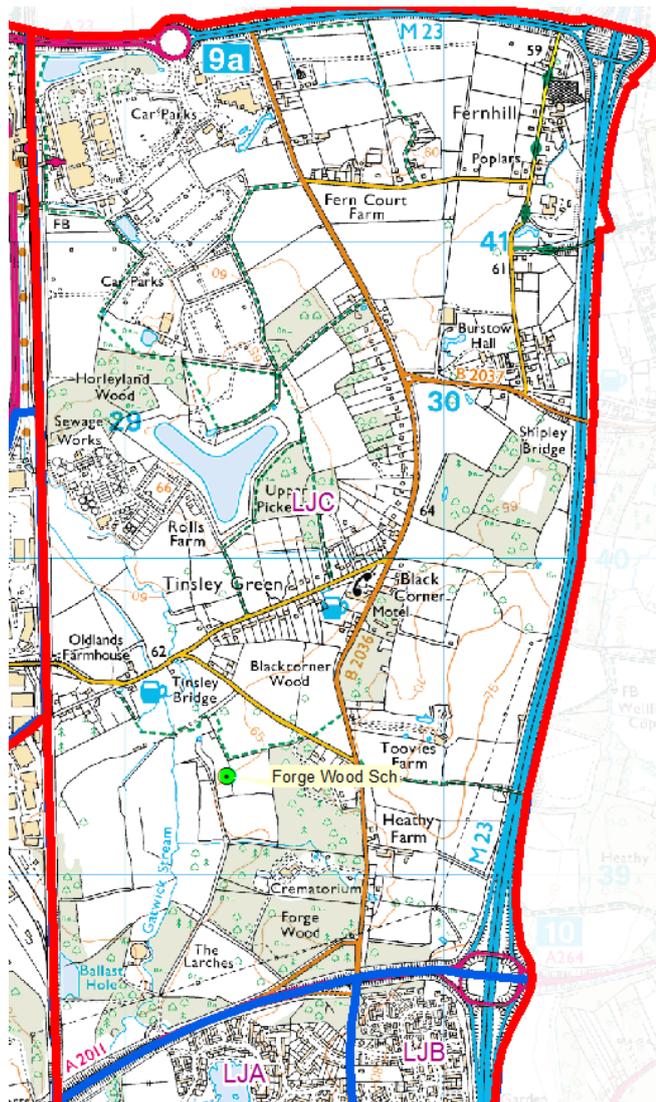
5.2 Pound Hill North and Forge Wood Ward

Forge Wood

The Committee agreed that a separate polling district be created for the Forge Wood Development with polling to take place at a location in Forge Wood.

When Forge Wood is more fully developed a Community Centre for the area will be provided, but this is unlikely to be available for polling for several years. The most suitable interim location is Forge Wood Primary school. The Acting Returning Officer is in discussion with the School to explore whether polling can take place without the need for the school to close. A consultation response from an elector has supported the use of the Primary School.

There are limited alternative options for polling in the area. A portable building on the car park opposite the school could be provided, although this would be an expensive option with more restricted access for electors with disabilities. Heathy Farm Public House has also been investigated, but its location to the east of the Balcombe Road away from the majority of the current Forge Wood development would mean that most electors on foot would need to cross Balcombe Road to vote. The outcome of the discussions with Forge Wood Primary School will be reported to the meeting.



Grattons Indoor Bowls Club

The Committee agreed to continue polling at the Grattons Indoor Bowls Club in place of the proposed Milton Mount Community Centre. The Acting Returning Officer has discussed internal access to the room used for polling with the bowls club and is now satisfied that adequate arrangements will be made on polling day.

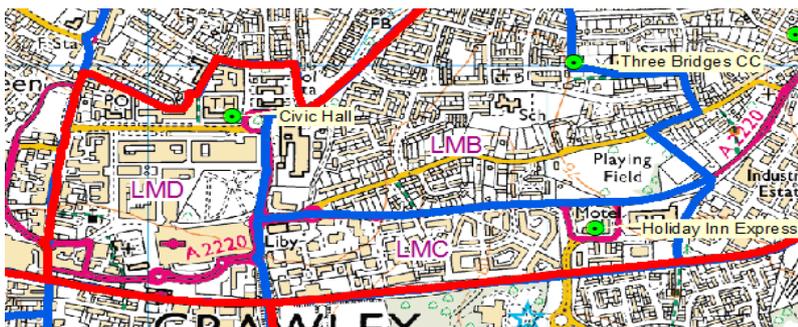


5.3 Three Bridges Ward

The Committee agreed that a new polling district be created specifically for the Town Centre and Pembroke Park, with a polling place in a central location to be determined in locations in the area of Crawley Library or Crawley College. Officers have identified a number of problems with using the library as a polling station. Whilst access is excellent, the only enclosed rooms on the ground floor are offices making security of polling and the library difficult to enforce during polling hours.

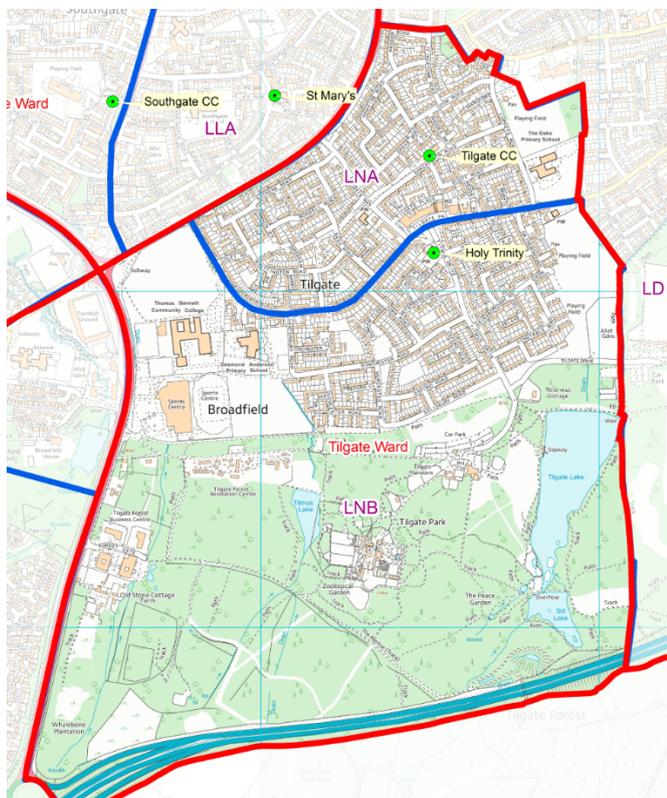
The Holiday Inn Express has operated as the polling station for Pembroke Park successfully for several years, with low hire and administration costs. Locating the polling place to Crawley College would provide less convenient voting for electors in Pembroke Park and offer less convenient voting for electors in the town centre area than alternatives within the town centre.

The Acting Returning Officer recommends that two polling districts are created as set out in the map below, with polling for LMC taking place at The Holiday Inn Express. It is also recommended that the Civic Hall in the Town Hall is the polling place for LMD. The use of the Civic Hall will provide a specific polling place for Town Centre electors at no additional staffing or accommodation cost. It is proposed that polling arrangements for the Town Centre are reviewed prior to the May 2020 elections if, following demolition of the Civic Hall, no suitable facilities are available in the Town Hall at that time.



5.4 Tilgate Ward

The Committee agreed to retain the existing polling places for Tilgate but to have Ashdown Drive as the boundary between the polling districts in place of the previous boundary to had been drawn for previous polling places. The Acting Returning Officer supports this proposal and the proposed polling districts are set out in the map below.



6. Implications

- 6.1 The creation or removal of polling districts and provision of additional polling places has financial implications in terms of the cost of staffing polling places, the delivery and collection of equipment and the hire of premises.
- 6.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2013 requires the Council to review polling districts and places every five years. Representations must be made by the Acting Returning Officer to the Council and the Council must actively seek representations from persons it thinks have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with different forms of disability.

7. Background Papers

[Electoral Commission – Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations](#)

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