

Polling District and Polling Place Review

Portfolio:	Non-executive function
Ward(s) Affected:	All

Purpose:

To agree revised polling districts and polling places following the changes introduced by the Surrey Heath (Electoral Changes) Order 2017.

1. Background

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed changes to the polling districts and polling places as required following the recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for new and revised local government electoral arrangements for the Borough. The new arrangements are to come into force at the next local government elections.
- 1.2. The proposals are designed to try to ensure there is a balance of electorate within each polling district and that polling places are convenient and easily accessible for electors.
- 1.3. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) undertook a review of the electoral wards of Surrey Heath and made the recommendations which will result in:
 - Surrey Heath will be represented by 35 ward councillors, 5 fewer than at the current time.
 - Surrey Heath will have 14 wards, two fewer than at the current time.
 - The boundaries of some wards will be changed - paragraph 6 sets out further detail of these changes.
 - The new arrangements will come into force at the local government elections on Thursday 2 May 2019.
- 1.4. The Surrey Heath (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 was made by Parliament on 13 December 2017 implementing the changes. Annex A sets out a list of the new wards and the number of Councillors that will represent each ward.
- 1.5. As a result of the changes, the (Acting) Returning Officer was required to carry out a review of all the polling districts and polling places in the borough. The wards can be sub-divided into smaller geographical areas called polling districts. Each polling district has a polling place where the polling station for the district is located and where electors living in the district will vote.
- 1.6. The guiding principles in reviewing the polling districts and polling places were:

- To seek to ensure that all electors in the district have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- Where possible, no more than 2,500 electors should vote at any one polling station (not including postal voters); however, there can be more than one polling station in a polling place.
- Proposed future developments that will increase the number of houses and the potential number of electors in a ward or polling district over the next four years.
- To ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places are accessible to those who are disabled.
- Where possible to reduce the number of schools used as polling places.

1.7. A list of the proposed polling districts and polling places is attached as Annex B to this document. It is proposed that Surrey Heath will have 28 polling districts.

1.8. As there are significant changes to some wards and consequently some polling districts, it has not been possible to provide precise details of the suggested streets and electorate per polling district within this report. Further in-depth information can be obtained from the Democratic Services Manager.

2. Consultation and Engagement

2.1. The (Acting) Returning Officer published the proposals for new polling districts on 1 March 2018 seeking the views and comments of electors, interested parties and any persons with expertise in access to premises for persons with any type of disability. A copy of the consultation documentation can be viewed at the [Polling District and Polling Places Review Consultation Document](#).

2.2. The proposals were open for consultation until 31 May 2018. In total 6 submissions were received and considered by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A summary of the submissions received and the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer can be found at Annex C.

3. Equalities Impact

3.1. As far as is reasonable and practicable the polling places are accessible to the disabled. Where new polling places are being used, the accessibility has been assessed as being suitable by electoral officers.

3.2. For those less able to vote in person at a polling station the option of voting by post or proxy will be an option.

4. Legal Issues

4.1. Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, requires the Council to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places in its

area within the period of 16 months of 1 October 2013 and then within the period of 16 months from the 1 October of every fifth year after that. The next compulsory review is required to be started and completed within the period 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.

- 4.2. The review undertaken as a consequence of the changes to ward boundaries to be introduced by Surrey Heath (Electoral Changes) Order 2017 is not a compulsory review. The review has been carried out in accordance with Schedule A1 of the RPA which requires the Council to publish its proposals and consult and seek representations from certain prescribed people. Electors may also make representations.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. Other Changes Required as part of the Review

- 6.1. Set out below is a summary of the changes which have been made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and, where relevant, how these changes affect polling arrangements.

Camberley

- (a) Electors in The Terrace, Camberley have moved from St Michaels Ward to Town Ward. However, it is not intended to change the polling arrangements for these electors who will continue to vote at Crossroads Evangelical Church, Queen Mary Avenue.
- (b) Electors residing in the area south of the A30 and north of the railway line, previously within the St Pauls ward, will transfer to Old Dean ward. It is proposed that these electors will vote at Old Dean Youth Centre, Kingston Road.
- (c) Electors residing in the roads adjoining the east of Brackendale Road, who had previously fallen within the Town ward, will now come within Watchetts ward. It is proposed that these electors will now vote at St Mary's Church Hall, Park Road.

Frimley/ Frimley Green

- (d) Electors residing in the development off of Frimley Green Road, known locally as the Ansells estate, and some properties facing Frimley Green Road will move from Frimley ward to Frimley Green ward. It is proposed that these electors will now vote at Frimley Community Centre, Balmoral Drive.

Heatherside and Parkside

- (e) Electors in the east of Parkside ward, incorporating the area east of Springfield Road, with the exclusion of Youlden Drive and Youlden Close, will move from Parkside ward to Heatherside ward. It is proposed that these electors will now vote at Heatherside Community Centre, Martindale Avenue.

Bisley and West End

- (f) Electors in Bisley & West End villages will now comprise a single borough ward. There will be no consequent change to polling arrangements and voters will continue to vote at Bisley Village Hall, School Close or Tringhams Hall, Benner Lane.

Windlesham and Chobham

- (g) The new electoral arrangements have resulted in the existing Windlesham ward being divided: the northerly part of the ward will move to Bagshot ward, with parish ward boundaries altered to match this change, so they come within Bagshot ward of Windlesham parish. The remainder of Windlesham will now fall within a new Windlesham & Chobham ward and will now comprise the Windlesham ward of Windlesham parish. Chobham parish remains a separate parish area.
- (h) Electors residing in the area north of Snows Ride in Windlesham now fall within Bagshot ward. It is proposed to revise the polling district in this area to match the new ward boundaries and that the electors will continue to vote at Windlesham Village Infant School.
- (i) It is proposed that electors, who previously voted at Windlesham Village School but under the new arrangements will remain within Windlesham ward of Windlesham Parish and will now fall within Windlesham & Chobham borough ward, will be incorporated in the polling district for the remainder of the Windlesham area and will vote at Chertsey Road Hall.

- 6.2. All electors, who will be required to use a different polling station or vote in a different ward, will be notified in writing of the new arrangements well in advance of the commencement of the electoral timetable for the May 2019 elections.

7. Use of Schools as Polling Places

- 7.1. Returning Officers are entitled to require the use any publicly funded school as a polling place. It is, however, the Council's stated aim to avoid using schools as polling stations where possible. The proposed schedule of polling places has reduced the number of schools used as polling places from 5 schools to 3.
- 7.2. The following schools will continue to be in use as polling stations:

Lakeside Primary School, Alphington Avenue

This polling place currently serves the Frimley (East) polling district. Prior to the consultation a number of options which would allow the Returning Officer to discontinue using this school were reviewed, including creating a single polling district within the ward, with the other polling place currently used in Frimley ward – St Peters Church Hall - as the designated polling place. Other alternative locations within the ward were also considered but no suitable alternative was identified.

During the consultation, the Electoral Services team was contacted by a representative of Frimley Baptist Church, Balmoral Drive, offering its use as a polling place. This church is located just outside the ward boundary in the Frimley Green ward. Having assessed whether this venue could be used as a polling place for the FB polling district, it is felt that it could lead to confusion for electors within Frimley Green ward who would pass this polling place to attend their allocated station; in addition, the venue is not conveniently well located for a significant number of the electors who would be allocated to this polling place.

Windlesham Village Infant School

This polling place currently serves the Windlesham North West polling district and it is proposed to retain its use for the revised polling district which will fall within Bagshot ward from May 2019 onwards.

Investigations into using the Windlesham Club and Theatre had been made prior to the consultation but it had been felt that this venue's access posed difficulties. It was also recognised that it fell outside the revised polling district.

- 7.3. The third school which remains in use as a polling station, The Orchard Campus, South Camberley Primary School, makes arrangements for the school to remain open on polling day. As such, there is no intention to change these arrangements.

8. Proposal

- 8.1. It is proposed that the Council agrees the revised schedule of polling districts and polling places from 2 May 2019 onwards, as set out at Annex A to this report

9. Recommendation

- 9.1. The Council is advised to RESOLVE to
 - (i) note the consequences of the Surrey Heath (Electoral Changes) Order 2017, which will be in effect from the local government elections on Thursday 2 May 2019;

- (ii) note that the (Acting) Returning Officer will work with the Windlesham Infant School to attempt to find a solution to enable the school to operate on polling day, subject to any arrangements ensuring the children's safety whilst not impeding the poll; and
- (iii) approve the revised schedule of polling districts and polling places from 2 May 2019 onwards, as set out at Annex B to this report.

Background Papers: [Polling District and Polling Places Review Consultation Document](#)

[The Surrey Heath \(Electoral Changes\) Order 2017](#)

[Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review](#)

Annexes

Annex A – list of revised wards

Annex B – revised schedule of polling districts and polling places

Annex C – consultation responses with the ARO's comments

Author:

Rachel Whillis – Democratic Services Manager
rachel.whillis@surreyheath.gov.uk

Executive Head of Service:

Karen Whelan – (Acting) Returning Officer