

## Polling District and Polling Place Review

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

### **Purpose:**

To further consider revised polling arrangements for the Frimley ward and the Windlesham (South) polling district.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Council at its meeting on 9 October 2019 considered a report on a recent Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places which had been undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements. The review had taken place in July 2019.
- 1.2. The Council, whilst agreeing the revised schedule of polling districts and polling places, deferred decisions relating to the Frimley Ward and Windlesham (South) polling district.

## **2. Frimley Ward**

- 2.1. Currently the Frimley Ward is divided in 2 Polling Districts and the designated polling places are Lakeside School (Frimley East) and St Peters Church Hall (Frimley West). During the May 2019 elections representations had been received from School concerning its continued use as a polling place. The concerns related to the need to close the School on polling day and the consequential disruption to the pupils' education. Options for using alternative sites within the School, which would enable it to remain open on polling day, have been reviewed but are not considered to be suitable.
- 2.2. In addition, whilst 2019 may have been unusual in terms of the number of elections, Lakeside School has had to be closed on 3 occasions, 2 of which were not known well in advance.
- 2.3. As part of the consultation and engagement exercise undertaken in July 2019 options had been offered relating to the continued use of Lakeside School or the creation of a single polling district for the Frimley Ward so that all electors would vote at St Peters Church Hall and use of the school would cease.
- 2.4. Six responses had been received during the consultation, all of which supported discontinuing the current arrangements and indicated a support for St Peters being the designated polling station for the entire ward.
- 2.5. Ward members' views had been sought on the proposal to cease using Lakeside School and for all voters to move to St Peters Church Hall. Both ward councillors, whilst indicating a preference to continue with the current

arrangements of Lakeside School, were understanding of the Council aspirations to stop using schools as polling places wherever possible.

- 2.6. As part of the further review all the options for a polling place for Frimley (East) had been revisited as follows:

	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issues</b>
1.	To use the Baptist Church in Balmoral Drive, Frimley as a polling place	The Church is outside the polling district boundaries and its use would cause confusion for electors within Frimley Green ward who would pass it to attend their allocated station.
2.	To redraw the polling district boundaries to accommodate use of the Baptist Church.	The issue outlined above would still apply.
3.	To retain the existing arrangements at Lakeside School	This doesn't meet the Council aspirations to stop using schools as polling places wherever possible and there would be continued disruption to the School.
4.	To retain the existing arrangements at Lakeside School, with using an alternative classroom to enable to School to remain open.	Safeguarding issues and access issues for voters with disabilities have been identified.
5.	To identify other suitable premises within the polling district.	Investigations have been made. Tomlinscote School are not able to allow use of any of their buildings. No other suitable premises have been identified.
6.	To create a single polling district for the Frimley Ward so that all electors would vote at St Peters Church Hall	This would enable use of the school to cease. Although some voters would have further to travel but this is within acceptable distances and similar to other wards in the Borough.

### **3. Windlesham (South)**

- 3.1. The Chertsey Road Hall, the polling place for the Windlesham (South) polling district, is likely to close at the end of 2019. However the new owners of the Hall have not yet indicated whether it would continue to be available for use as a polling station.

- 3.2. As a result investigations have been made into the use of alternative premises. The new Windlesham Field of Remembrance Pavilion is the preferred option to replace Chertsey Road Hall. However the trustees have indicated that it is unlikely to be available for use as a polling place as they do not want to disturb bookings by regular users.
- 3.3. Investigations on further alternative premises are continuing but are unlikely to be resolved before the New Year. In addition it will be necessary to conduct further consultation in relation to any new proposals.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

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

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. In relation to Frimley Ward it is suggested that Option 6 above be pursued.
- 5.2. In relation to the Windlesham (South) polling district it is proposed that investigations continue and that authority be delegated to the (Acting) Returning Officer, after consultation with ward councillors, to designate a polling place.

#### **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. The Council is advised to RESOLVE that
- (i) a single polling district be created for the Frimley ward and the designated polling place for all voters be St Peters Church Hall, Parsonage Way, Frimley;
  - (ii) investigations continue to identify a polling place for NA-Windlesham (South) polling district; and
  - (iii) the (Acting) Returning Officer, after appropriate public consultation, including consultation with ward councillors, be authorised to designate a polling place for the NA-Windlesham (South) polling district; the decision to be reported to Council at the earliest opportunity.

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

[Responses to the Polling District and Polling Places Review Consultation](#)

**Annexes** None

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