

## REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 11 March 2011)

### 1. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 44)

The law requires electoral registration authorities to review polling districts and polling places at least every four years. The next review in New Forest District was due to commence later this year, but, following a request from the Electoral Commission arising from problems experienced at some polling stations in other parts of the country at the 2010 Parliamentary elections, the Committee decided to undertake a review a year earlier than required. The Committee also wished, as part of the review, to assess the viability of some little used polling stations.

The Committee appointed a Working Party to oversee the review. In undertaking the review, the Working Party and the Committee have been mindful of the need to ensure that polling stations represent value for money, but have borne in mind that cost is only one of the factors to be taken into account. The major consideration is the provision of such reasonable and accessible facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

The review was published on the Council's website and comments were invited from all district councillors, parish and town councils and disability groups. Only three responses were received. All relevant documents were kept available for inspection at the Council's Information Offices. All members of the Council were invited to attend the meeting of the Working Party on 16 February 2011.

The Council is reminded that responsibility for the designation of polling districts, polling places and polling stations falls to different bodies and individuals:

- The designation of polling districts is a matter for the Council
- The designation of polling places is a matter for the Executive
- The designation of polling stations is a matter for the Returning Officer

Unless special circumstances apply, a polling place and a polling station should be within the polling district to which they relate.

Members have spent some time considering polling stations with low usage, and have recommended to the Returning Officer that the polling stations at Exbury Club and the Caravan at Wootton be discontinued, and that voters be re-allocated to the Beaulieu Village Hall and St John's Church Hall in Bashley respectively. This change requires a change to the designated polling place (a Cabinet function) and a recommendation to this effect was made to the Cabinet on 6 April.

The Committee has also considered an alternative venue for some voters allocated to the Community Centre at Poulner Junior School, which is considered too small for the number of electors voting there. The Committee has recommended to the Returning Officer and to the Cabinet that most of the voters in RC polling district be allocated to the St John the Baptist Church Hall in Linford Road, Poulner. A recommendation for a change in the polling district arising from this change appears below. The Cabinet has considered the designation of the polling place.

Finally, a further change to a polling district, this time in Totton, is required in order to meet the direction of the Chief Counting Officer for the referendum that no more than 2,500 voters (after deducting postal voters) may be allocated to a single polling station. There is only one polling station in the District which has more than 2,500 voters, that serving TG polling district at the Calmore Community Centre. A recommendation to adjust the polling districts to transfer some TG voters to TH polling district appears below.

All registered electors who will be affected by changes have been informed in writing of their new polling stations, and have been invited to apply for postal votes if they find their new polling stations inconvenient.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the RA and RC polling districts be amended by moving Lilac Close and Winston Way from RC to RA polling district; and**
- (b) That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the TG and TH polling districts be amended by moving voters in the following roads from TG to TH:**

**Court Close  
Buckland Gardens  
Warren Place  
Cooks Lane  
Pauletts Lane  
Loperwood Lane  
Flowerdown Close  
Cedarwood Close**

**Councillor J Penwarden  
CHAIRMAN**