

From: Sonia Masterman
Sent: 09 June 2011 09:29
To: Tina Harwood
Subject: FW: Review of Polling Stations and Polling Places

Hi Tina,

Just to confirm details on the consultation you asked me to carry out for you. I forwarded the email you sent me direct to the Chairman of New Forest Access For All who then circulated it to all the members of the organisation requesting that they respond. I, in my role as Equalities Officer then spoke to the Committee at a meeting to gauge views but none were offered as they felt the venues used were accessible.

(New Forest Access For All is a charity that works closely with the Council on many issues relating to disability. This has included viewing planning applications, employee training sessions, buildings audits, leaflet production and various consultations. They have been involved more recently in auditing the Council's polling stations and advising on literature produced to help people understand how to vote. The organisation has approximately 26 members who have a wide range of disabilities).

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From: Tina Harwood
Sent: 08 December 2010 09:48
To: Sonia Masterman
Subject: Review of Polling Stations and Polling Places

Hi Sonia

Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires Councils to review the polling districts and polling places within their areas every four years. The first review took place during 2007 and its conclusions were implemented at the end of December 2007. A further review must be completed by 31 December 2011 but, following the difficulties experienced at some polling stations in other areas at the 2010 Parliamentary elections, the Electoral Commission has encouraged District Councils to bring forward their next reviews.

The District Council has decided to commence a review, in the knowledge that it will not be completed in its entirety before the May 2011 elections, but in the hope that any significant issues that might arise might be addressed in time for May 2011.

Details of the review have been published on the District Council's website – please go to <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11170>

There you will find:

- (a) The formal notice of the review;
- (b) Background information about the review;

- (c) A schedule of all the polling stations in the district, together with the Returning Officer's comments on each; and
- (d) A schedule showing those polling stations that are very little used and on which comments are sought as to their retention in the future.

Although the following information is contained in the documents referred to above, the following is a brief resume of what is being reviewed and the principles underlying the review:

1. **A "polling district"** is a geographical subdivision of an electoral area, such as a parliamentary constituency or district ward. You will know their polling districts by the distinctive letters that apply to the registers in their wards, for example: LA & LB – Parts of Lymington and Pennington Town Council area that comprise the Buckland District Ward
2. **A "polling place"** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. This could be defined as widely as the entire polling district or as tightly as a particular building;
3. **A "polling station"** is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

The principal factors that must be addressed in undertaking the review are:

- (a) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- (b) **To ensure that, as far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled;** and
- (c) the polling place for a polling district must be within the polling district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area outside of the polling district.

If you would like to view maps of the polling districts, or if you are unable to view the consultation documents on-line, please contact me. When commenting, you are asked preferably to use the on-line comments form available on the NFDC website, but you may also e-mail or write to me.

Comments are requested by Friday 4 February 2011.

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tina Harwood

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