

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2013/14

1. Reason for Review

- 1.1 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 next four-yearly review would normally have been due in 2015 with implementation in 2016, but legislation has been amended to provide that a review must be carried out and completed during the period of 16 months beginning with 1 October 2013, and then every five years thereafter. The Government has apparently made the change in order to ensure that any anomalies with polling districts and stations are addressed before the 2015 Parliamentary and local elections.

2. How the review is conducted

- 2.1 In general terms, the Council announces that a review is to take place. The Council consults the Returning Officer, who makes representations on existing and proposed polling arrangements. The Council publishes the Returning Officer's proposals and invites comments. These are considered before final decisions are made.
- 2.2 The Council must actively seek comments from people who have a particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with disabilities.
- 2.3 Any elector may make representations. Although not specifically required by law, the District Council's consultation will include parish and town councils, local political parties and elected representatives.
- 2.4 The Returning Officer's comments have been sought and these are included in the schedule of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.

3. "Polling Districts", "Polling Places" and "Polling Stations"

- 3.1 A "polling district" is a subdivision of a larger electoral area such as a Parliamentary constituency, into a smaller area within which a polling place convenient to electors can be designated.
- 3.2 A "polling place" is the building or area within which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer.
- 3.3 A "polling station" is the room or building where the poll takes place.
- 3.4 In order to provide maximum flexibility in the event of buildings not being available when elections are held, the Council has in the past designated the whole of the polling districts as polling places. It is then for the Returning Officer to designate a polling station for each election. The Returning Officer always tries to use the same polling stations but this is not always possible. The Returning Officer therefore considers it advantageous to retain the current practice of designating the whole of a polling district as the polling

place, and he recommends this course of action. However, the Council is seeking views on the suitability of the individual polling stations as part of this review.

- 3.5 The last review of the polling districts and polling places/stations took place in 2010 which came into effect at the May 2011 elections. A handful of changes were made following the 2010/11 review. The schedule of polling districts, polling places and polling stations reflects those currently in use.

4. What has to be taken into account

- 4.1 The law provides that the Council must take the following considerations into account when drawing up proposals. Anyone wishing to submit representations should bear the following in mind when submitting their comments:

The Council must seek to ensure that:

- (a) all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
- (b) as far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled.

5. The Returning Officer's proposals

- 5.1 The Returning Officer is not proposing significant changes to polling districts, polling places or polling stations, but has highlighted an issue with the polling station in Calshot covering the FA polling district – St Georges Centre, Tristan Close, Calshot. Comments on this would be especially welcomed. There are a number of polling stations situated in sparsely populated areas with few voters allocated to vote at them, and comments on the need to continue to provide these are also invited. A limited number of polling stations are not fully accessible to persons with disabilities but in most cases there are no suitable alternative premises of which the Returning Officer is aware that could be used instead.

6. Making representations

- 6.1 Please be aware that any representations you make will be published on the Council's website and will be available for public inspection.
- 6.2 We would prefer you to complete the on-line comments form that may be accessed on the District Council's website, www.newforest.gov.uk – follow the links from the front page.
- 6.3 You may also use the comments forms that are available with these documents. Further forms are available from the Electoral Services Office – tel (023) 8028 5445, or e-mail electoralservices@nfdc.gov.uk

6.4 Alternatively, comments may be made in writing to:

Tina Harwood
Electoral Services Officer
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA
Tel: (023) 8028 5445
e-mail: tina.harwood@nfdc.gov.uk

6.5 Throughout the review, all working papers, minutes of any meetings and correspondence will be published on the Council's website and will be available for inspection at the Electoral Services Office.