

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

26 June 2008

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 REVISION TO SCHEDULE OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

1.1 Background to Polling Districts and Places

1.1.1 Polling districts are created by the division of a parliamentary constituency, ward or division into smaller parts within which a polling place can be determined that is convenient to electors. The registers of electors are produced based on polling districts.

1.1.2 Designated polling places may be buildings or areas within which polling stations may be established by the Returning Officer at which electors vote at elections. If no polling place is designated for a polling district the polling district as a whole is to be taken as the polling place. The creation of polling districts and the designation of polling places are the responsibility of the local authority, but the provision of polling stations is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

1.2 Reviewing the provision of Polling districts and places

1.2.1 Section 18 of the Representation of the People Act (1983) requires local authorities to divide its area into polling districts and designate a polling place for each district and to keep these arrangements under review.

1.2.2 The most recent review of these arrangements was undertaken in December 2007 to meet our duty under Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 "to conduct a full review by 31 December 2007". These arrangements apply to all types of elections but they may be reviewed at any time.

1.3 West Malling Parish Polling Place

1.3.1 The Schedule of Polling Districts and Places approved by Members in December 2007 included a change of Polling Place in the Parish of West Malling from West Malling Church of England Primary School to Age Concern, Norman Road.

- 1.3.2 Since this revision of the schedule as Returning Officer I have received written representations from both the West Malling Parish Council and West Malling Church of England Primary School outlining their concerns regarding this change in location.
- 1.3.3 Whilst no one could disagree that the Age Concern building itself would be suitable as a Polling Place, it has been drawn to my attention, as Returning Officer, that if the school were to remain open on Polling Day, the increase in traffic flow to this area of West Malling could put an unnecessary strain on the local roads and could be potentially dangerous to both motorists and pedestrians.
- 1.3.4 I have therefore reconsidered the location of the Polling Place. After supportive discussions with the Head Teacher of West Malling Church of England Primary School, it has been agreed that the School could be closed on Polling Day and instead of using the Language Unit, as has been the case in recent years, a suitable area within the main school itself, most probably the Main Hall, could be used as the Polling Place.
- 1.3.5 I firmly believe that this revised, DDA compliant, venue would be of additional benefit to electors and local residents as not only will it ease traffic flow in the area it will also provide ample parking within the curtilage of the school site for those choosing to drive to the Polling Place.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 As discussed above.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The use of West Malling Church of England Primary School would reduce anticipated tensions in traffic flow, avoid any unnecessary strain on the local roads and remove potentially dangerous conflict between motorists and pedestrians.

1.7 Policy Considerations

- 1.7.1 Community
- 1.7.2 The use of West Malling Church of England Primary School as a Polling Place will require it to close throughout each Polling Day.

1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 It is recommended that the West Malling Church of England Primary School be adopted as the Polling Place for the Parish of West Malling.

Background papers:

contact: Paul Fowler

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive