

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**3 October 2022**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Council**

**1 FINAL PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

**Following receipt of the final recommendations for the warding arrangements, from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, a Polling District & Polling Place review, has been undertaken to implement the changes to the warding arrangements and ensure the Polling Districts lie within the Parish, Ward and Constituency boundaries.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Following the consultation period, this report details the final proposals for the new structure of the Polling Districts/Places/Stations under the new warding arrangements. Previous reports at **Annexe 1 & Annexe 1a**

**1.2 Consultation Results**

1.2.1 We received 7 responses to our consultation. The consultation ran from 27<sup>th</sup> June – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022. Only 1 response had counter proposals, which we have looked at and taken some into consideration, in the final proposals.

1.2.2 Please see all consultation responses at **Annexe 9**

**1.3 Final Polling Districts/Places**

1.3.1 At **Annexe 2** is a list of the existing wards, the Polling Districts and Polling Places that are within each Polling District.

1.3.2 At **Annexe 3** is a list of the new wards and the final proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places that are within each Polling District.

1.3.3 At **Annexe 4** is the existing Wards map

1.3.4 At **Annexe 5** is the new Wards map.

1.3.5 At **Annexe 6** is the existing Polling Districts/Places map

1.3.6 At **Annexe 7** is the final proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places map. For clarity, the red lines are the new ward boundaries, the blue lines are the proposed polling district boundaries, and the green lines are parish boundaries.

1.3.7 At **Annexe 8** is the Polling District/Place Review Timetable

1.3.8 The main changes are as follows: -

- Polling District boundary between Walderslade and Aylesford North & North Downs moved out to match the new ward boundary.
- Polling District boundary between Aylesford North & North Downs and Aylesford South & Ditton moved slightly to match the new ward boundary.
- We have created a new Polling District within Snodland West and Holborough lakes ward, called Holborough Lakes with the new Polling Place/station situated at the Holborough Lakes Village Hall.
- We have created a new polling district within Tonbridge between Hildenborough and Judd. This Polling District has been created as the Ward and Parish boundaries are not co-terminus. we will use the Oast Theatre (with Stocks Green CP as a back-up in the event of us not being able to use the theatre if an unscheduled election is called) as the Polling Place/Station. For clarity when there is a ward election for Hildenborough ward, residents in this Polling District will be able to vote, if there is a Parish election for Hildenborough the residents of this Polling District will not be able to vote as they sit outside the Parish.
- The other Polling Districts within Tonbridge have been moved to match the new Ward boundaries for each ward.
- The names of some of the Polling Districts have been changed to reflect the new ward names.
- The Polling Districts have all been recoded as well.

## 1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) requires borough councils to undertake reviews of polling districts and polling places at least every four years and following a Local Government Boundary Review, where warding arrangements are changed.

## 1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 The cost of this review will be met from existing budgets. Failure to correctly undertake this review could impose considerable financial penalties on the (Acting) Returning Officers due to problems at elections; this would trigger a series of events bringing cost and reputational damage to the Council.

## **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 The requirements of electors are essential and a failure to correctly undertake this review could result in disenfranchising electors or making it more difficult for them to vote.
- 1.6.2 Any failure in the process or consideration of comments made during the consultation stage could result in the Electoral Commission over-ruling the decisions of the Council.

## **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The selection of polling places takes into account the needs of electors with disabilities and as far as is reasonably practicable, efforts are made to ensure all eligible electors are able to access polling stations. Risk assessments of all polling places are being undertaken, and this includes a series of access questions. Presiding Officers at polling stations also provide feed-back on accessibility of polling stations at elections.

## **1.8 Recommendations**

- 1.8.1 To approve the final proposals, subject to the ward changes being laid to law in Parliament in October 2022.

Background papers:

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Annexe 1 & 1a

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