

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

24 January 2024

Report of the Interim Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Following receipt of the final recommendations for the Constituency arrangements, from the Boundary Commission for England, a Polling District & Polling Place Review, has been undertaken to implement any necessary changes to Polling Districts/Places.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Boundary Commission for England have undertaken a review of Parliamentary constituencies across the UK.

1.1.2 As part of these changes a review of the Polling Districts and Places had to be undertaken. The changes have to be implemented in time for a pending Parliamentary Election.

1.1.3 Following the consultation period this report details the final proposals for the new constituency structure and the Polling Districts/Places/Stations under the new Constituency arrangements. Please see previous General Purposes Committee report dated 11 October 2023 at **Annexe 1**, detailing the process and timetable.

1.2 Consultation Results

12.1 We have received no responses to the consultation that ran from 1 December 2023 – 1 January 2024.

1.3 Final Polling Districts /Places

1.3.1 At **Annexe 2**, is a list of the final Polling Districts/places in each constituency that covers our Borough.

1.3.2 The changes are:-

- the polling district codes and the constituencies that each Polling District sits in.

- The Polling Station for Snodland East and Central has changed from the Devonshire Rooms to Snodland Working Man's club and the polling station for Wouldham has changed from Wouldham All Saints C of E Primary school to Peters Village Hall.

1.3.3 At **Annexe 3** is a map showing the new constituencies and their final Polling Districts/Places.

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 for each change to Parliamentary boundaries. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places.

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 potential cost and embarrassment to the Council.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 The requirements of our 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 have been 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 General Purposes Committee are **RECOMMENDED** to agree the new Polling District/Place structure as set out in this report and **Annexes 2 to 3**.

Background papers:

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Annexes 1-3

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