

Council

Meeting Date: 24 January 2024

Title: POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW 2023/24

Report of: Chief Executive and Returning Officer

Confidentiality: Non-Exempt

Summary

1. The report sets out a detail of the proposed new polling places for:
 - Yateley North
 - Stockton
 - Dogmersfield

Recommendation

- A. That Yateley Industries, Mill Lane be designated as the polling place for the Yateley North (YN) polling district.
- B. That Fleet Parish Community Centre, Church Road be designated as the polling place for the Stockton (FS) polling district.
- C. That Dogmersfield C of E Primary School, Chatter Alley be designated as the polling place for the Dogmersfield (D) polling district after the May 2024 elections.

Background

2. The responsibility of designating polling districts and polling places within the district lies with the Council. As part of the required review process, which includes feedback from members of the public, councillors, and parishes, three changes have been proposed.
3. In the Yateley North area, the Yateley Village Hall has been used in the past as a polling venue. However, it is located outside the designated polling district. Despite efforts to find a suitable venue within the district, none have been identified yet. As an alternative, Yateley Industries has been proposed as a better alternative. It is situated closer to the boundary and is conveniently located near properties where electors can easily walk to the venue. Furthermore, this venue is easily accessible to everyone.
4. In Stockton, The Lismoyne Hotel has been used previously. Following comments made during the review, alternatives have been identified and Fleet Parish Community Centre, has been recommended.
5. In Dogmersfield, the Crookham Village WI Hall has been used as a polling venue in the past, even though it is not located within the polling district. The only other possible venue for polling within the area is the Dogmersfield C of E Primary School. After consulting with the school, it has been agreed that starting from the May 2024 elections, the school will be used as the official polling venue.

Main Issues

6. Yateley North polling district does not have a venue within the boundaries that can be used as a polling place. Venues were sought outside the boundary.

7. The Lismoyne Hotel is not very accessible and is set back from the main road. The alternative venue of Fleet Parish Community Centre is in a more visible location and accessible.
8. Dogmersfield electors currently vote at Crookham Village WI Hall. There are two polling stations within the venue, however at a county election three polling stations would be needed, and the venue is not big enough.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

9. There are no reasonable alternative options.

Legal and Constitutional Issues

10. The Council has authority to designate polling district and polling places within the District.

Financial and Resource Implications

11. There will be additional hire costs as there is an additional polling station after May 2024. This will be in the region of £500.
12. These additional costs will have to be met for District Council elections by Hart District Council. At other elections/referenda, these costs will be re-claimed.
13. For the changes to Yateley and Stockton arrangements, substituting one polling place for another, there might be slight differences in cost but same number of polling places overall.

Risk Management

14. These arrangements will ensure that more electors in Yateley North, Stockton and Dogmersfield have access to suitable polling station facilities within their polling district.

Equalities

15. No equalities issues are anticipated relating to these proposed changes.

Climate Change Implications

16. The introduction of an additional polling place in Dogmersfield will reduce the requirement for many voters to drive to their polling station.

Action

17. The new polling places will be confirmed, and information published to advise electors of changes prior to poll cards being issued for the May 2024 elections. This will be repeated before any election after May for Dogmersfield electors.

Contact Details: Daryl Phillips, Chief Executive