

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Corporate Support Committee 6 February 2025
SUBJECT:	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations in the Arun District 2023/24
LEAD OFFICER:	Lauren Fairs-Browning, Electoral Services Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Oppler, Chair of Corporate Support Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Ensuring that the polling places used for elections and in line with legislation and easily accessible for our electors.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Responsibility for the Electoral Services function and related workstreams sits within the Law & Governance Group.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There are no financial implications associated with this report.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the conclusions from the 2023/24 polling review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to Full Council; that

- 2.1 the Returning Officer's report on the 2023/24 review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations for the Arun District, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed; and
- 2.2 the use of the polling stations listed in Appendix 1 be agreed for future elections including the West Sussex County Council Elections scheduled to be held on 1 May 2025.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Council is required to conduct a formal review of its polling districts, places and stations every five years, with the current review period being 1 October 2023 to 31 January 2025. The 2023/24 review has been undertaken in two stages. Firstly, in preparation for the Police and Crime Commissioner election held on 2 May 2024; and secondly, using the feedback from this election and the unscheduled parliamentary election on 4 July 2024 to inform the final stage of the review.
- 3.2 This report sets out the findings of this review and seeks agreement to the polling districts and polling stations/places to be used for future elections.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council is required under legislation to conduct a regular formal review of its polling districts, polling places and polling stations. This review period began on 1 October 2023 and must be concluded, in good time, ahead of the West Sussex County Council elections in May 2025.
- 4.2 Officers acknowledge that those elections may or may not take place depending on the outcome of submissions made to central government by West Sussex County Council in relation to government's devolution and local government reorganisation proposals. Nevertheless the Council remains obliged to conduct and complete this review, which supports not only those elections but any future parliamentary and other elections within the district.
- 4.2 The 2023/24 review started formally on 1 October 2024 with the publication of a Notice of Review on the Council's website and noticeboards.
- 4.3 This review focused on polling districts, which are the areas comprising a number of roads and houses allocated to a polling place/polling station within a ward, and locations and venues used for polling stations. It will not consider ward boundaries, which are determined independently of the Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).
- 4.4 As the Committee will be aware, the aim has always been to locate polling stations within a convenient distance from the majority of elector's homes, with the premises being easy to find and accessible to all. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable premises as existing locations change or become unavailable. We regularly explore options for new premises, particularly in areas where there is new housing development or the provision of additional community facilities. We also seek the help of the local Ward and County Councillors when we need to explore alternatives. Although we undertake this statutory review, at the mandatory time, polling districts, places and stations are under continual review by this Council.
- 4.6 Following the Parliamentary election on 4 July 2024 feedback was requested in the form of a questionnaire which asked 6 questions:
1. Please details the polling station you are commenting about
 2. Overall are you happy with this polling station and its location
 3. In your opinion is the polling station suitable for electors with disabilities
 4. Does the polling station offer suitable facilities for an elector to be able to cast their vote in a private and straightforward manner
 5. Is the polling station well located in the area
 6. If the polling station is not well located, do you have any suggestions for an alternative premises we can explore

Comments from consultees have been added to the schedule at **Appendix 1**.

4.7 There are 99 polling districts and approximately 81 stations within the Arun District. **Appendix 1** lists the full schedule of current polling districts, polling places and polling stations that it is intended will be used for the West Sussex County Council election on 1 May 2025 and future elections until the next review.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Officers sought the views of all Councillors, the Acting Returning Officers responsible for the Arundel & South Downs, Chichester and Worthing West Constituencies, Election Agents and the views of those with disabilities, particularly with respect to accessibility.

5.2 In addition, residents and interested organisations were invited to make comments through the notice placed on the Council's website. We have also considered feedback from the polling staff out at the stations on 2 May and 4 July 2024.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 Under Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, all local authorities are required to review their polling districts and polling places at least every five years. The review period starts in October, and each authority may choose the exact dates and length of their review; however, it must fall within a 16-month period.

9.2 The purpose of reviewing polling districts and polling places is to try and make sure that voting facilities are as convenient, suitable and accessible as possible for everyone who uses them.

9.3 The review covers:

- polling districts - areas created when constituencies (for general elections) or wards (for local elections) are split into smaller parts to allow people to vote in a convenient way
- polling places - the location, normally the buildings, in which polling stations are sited within the polling districts

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications. This work will be carried out by officers under their day-to-day duties.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 There are no such implications associated with this report.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no such implications associated with this report

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Lauren Fairs-Browning

Job Title: Electoral Services Manager

Contact Number: 01903 737615

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None