

Agenda Item No: **Report No:**

Report Title: **Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

Report To: **Council** **Date:** **4 December 2007**

Lead Councillor: **Councillor Jon Freeman**

Wards Affected: **All**

Report By: **Head of Democratic Services**

Contact Officer: **Steven Andrews, Electoral Services Manager**

Purpose of Report

The Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by Section 18C of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, requires all district councils to undertake a review of polling districts and polling places. This process has to be completed by 31 December 2007 and then at four yearly intervals thereafter. This report considers the outcome of the consultation process and makes recommendations to Council.

Recommendation

1. To consider the results of the consultation process; and
 2. To approve the proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places in Tables 1 and 2.
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Reason for recommendation

1. To enable the Council to complete the review in accordance with the statutory requirement.

Information

2. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty for all polling districts and polling places to be reviewed by the end of 2007.
3. Local authorities are required to divide their area into polling districts for the purposes of parliamentary elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts and to keep these under review.
4. The Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006, sets out in Sections 18A and 18B, the criteria which the local authority must demonstrate that they have met as far as practicable. The statutory criteria are:-

Polling districts at Parliamentary Elections

- “18A (1) Every constituency is to be divided into polling districts.
- (2) A relevant authority must –
- (a) divide its area into polling districts for the purpose of parliamentary elections for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area; and
- (b) keep the polling districts under review.
- (3) The following rules apply –
- (a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- (b) in England, each parish is to be a separate polling district.
- (4) Subsection (3) (b) does not apply if, in any case, there are special circumstances.”

Polling places at Parliamentary Elections

- “18B (1) A polling place is to be designated for each polling district in a constituency.
- (2) But subsection (1) does not apply if the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors or any body of them.
- (3) A relevant authority must –
- (a) designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area, and
- (b) keep the polling places in its area under review.
- (4) The following rules apply –
- (a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- (b) the authority must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled;
- (c) the authority must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place or the designation of which as a polling place it is reviewing;
- (d) the polling place for a polling district must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district.
- (e) the polling place for a polling district must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.

(5) If no polling place is designated for a polling district the polling district is to be taken to be the polling place.”

5. To understand the scope of the review, it is helpful to explain the terminology used:

- A **polling district** is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area. An electoral area can either be a UK Parliamentary constituency (eg Lewes), a European Parliamentary electoral region (eg the South East), a ward (eg, Lewes Bridge), an East Sussex County electoral division (eg Chailey) or a parish (eg, Ringmer).
- A **polling place** is a geographical area in which a polling station is located. However, there is no legal definition of what a polling place is, the geographical area could be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire polling district. An example of a polling place might be a particular school, where the actual polling station within the school might vary from year to year.
- A **polling station** is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be within the polling place designated for the particular polling district.

The review process

The Lewes review process and timetable is as follows:

Polling District and Polling Place Review Process		
Review Stage	Timescale	Comments
Preliminary stage giving notice of the review	31 July 2007	Notice of the review was published on the Council's web site and offices
Consultation Stage	31 July to 31 August 2007	Notice was sent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewes District Councillors • County Councillors within Lewes District • Town and Parish Councils • Political Parties active within Lewes District • Acting Returning Officers for Brighton- Kemptown and Lewes Constituencies • Sussex Deaf Association • East Sussex Association for the Blind
	30 November 2007*	Publication of Register of Electors
Recommendation Stage	4 December 2007	Recommendations considered by Council and polling districts and polling places agreed.
New polling districts and polling places designated	5 December 2007*	Republication of Register of Electors

**The revised Register of Electors has to be published by 1 December 2007 (effectively 30 November 2007). As this is before the Council meeting on 4 December it will be necessary to republish the Register after the Council meeting to take account of Council's decisions.*

Outcome of Consultation Process

6. No comments suggesting changes within the remit of the review have been received for the following Wards.

Table 1

Polling District and Polling Place Designations – no proposed changes (Note 5)		
Ward	Polling District	Polling Place
Chailey and Wivelsfield Note 1	LBA – Chailey	Chailey Parish Hall, East Grinstead Road, North Chailey
	LBB - Wivelsfield	Wivelsfield Village Hall, Eastern Road, Wivelsfield
<i>Ditchling and Westmeston</i>	LCA – Ditchling (part)	Ditchling Village Hall, Lewes Road, Ditchling
	LCB – Ditchling (part)	Wivelsfield Village Hall, Eastern Road, Wivelsfield
	LCC – Westmeston	Westmeston Parish Hall, Lewes Road, Westmeston
East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs Note 2	LDA – East Saltdean	St Martins Church Hall, Longridge Avenue, Saltdean
	LDB – Telscombe (part)	Telscombe Hall, Tyedean Road, Telscombe Cliffs
	LDC – Telscombe (part)	Telscombe Cliffs C P School, Telscombe Cliffs Way, Telscombe Cliffs
Kingston Note 3	LEA – Falmer	Falmer Parish Hall
	LEB – Iford	Iford Village Hall
	LEC – Kingston	Kingston Parish Hall, The Street, Kingston
	LED – Piddinghoe	Piddinghoe Village Hall
	LEE – Rodmell	Rodmell Village Hall, The Street, Rodmell
	LEF – St Ann (without)	Christ Church/United Reformed Church Hall, Fitzjohn Road, Lewes
Lewes Bridge	LEG - Southease	Rodmell Village Hall, The Street, Rodmell
	LFA – Lewes Bridge (part)	The Town Hall, Fisher Street, Lewes
	LFB – Lewes Bridge (Part)	Cliffe Parish Hall, Cliffe High Street, Lewes
Newhaven Denton and Meeching	LFC – Lewes Bridge (part)	Malling Community Centre, Spences Lane, Lewes
	LIA – Newhaven Denton and Meeching (part)	Denton and Mount Pleasant Social Centre, Denton Road, Newhaven
	LIC – Newhaven Denton and Meeching (part)	East Side Social Centre, Baker Street, Newhaven
Newick Note 4	LID – Newhaven Denton and Meeching (part)	Meeching Hall, Fort Road, Newhaven
	LKA - Newick	Newick Community Centre, The Green, Newick
Ouse Valley and Ringmer	LLA – Beddingham	Beddingham Reading Room
	LLB – Firle	Firle Memorial Hall
	LLC – Glynde	Beddingham Reading Room
	LLD – Ringmer	Ringmer Village Halls
	LLE – South Heighton	Denton House Community Hall, Forward Close, South Heighton
	LLF – Tarring Neville	Denton House Community Hall, Forward Close, South Heighton
Peacehaven West	LOA – Peacehaven West	Peacehaven Parish Church Hall, Bramber

(part)	Avenue, Peacehaven
LOB – Peacehaven West	Hodder County Junior School, Hodder Avenue, Peacehaven
(part)	Avenue, Peacehaven
LOC – Peacehaven West	Meridian Centre, Meridian Way, Peacehaven
(part)	

Notes

1. *Chailey Parish Council expressed support for current arrangements.*
2. *Telscombe Town Council expressed support for current arrangements.*
3. *Kingston Parish Council expressed support for current arrangements.*
4. *Newick Parish Council expressed support for current arrangements.*
5. *The Council has previously designated the polling place as being the polling district. However, this is now discouraged by the Representation of the People Act 1983 which suggests that the polling place should be defined. The polling places have therefore been defined as the polling stations. The polling stations in this list are unchanged.*

7. It is recommended that the Polling Districts and Polling Places listed in Table 1 above be confirmed.

8. Following the outcome of the consultation process, it is recommended that changes are made to the arrangements for the following Wards:-

9. Barcombe and Hamsey Ward

Current designations for this Ward are

Polling District	Polling Place
LAA – Barcombe	Barcombe Village Hall, High Street, Barcombe
LAC – Hamsey	The Malthouse, Cooksbridge

Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington and St John (without) Ward

Current designations for this Ward are

Polling District	Polling Place
LPA – Plumpton	Village Hall, West Gate, Plumpton
LPB – Streat	Village Hall, West Gate, Plumpton
LPC – East Chiltington	The Jolly Sportsman, Chapel Lane, East Chiltington
LPD – St John (without)	The Malthouse, Cooksbridge

The Council was notified in March 2007 of a Planning Application for the change of use and conversion of the Malthouse, Cooksbridge into four residential units. The Returning Officer has looked at possible alternative venues for polling stations and considers that the newly built Beechwood Hall, Beechwood Lane, Cooksbridge would be a suitable venue.

It is recommended that the Beechwood Hall, Beechwood Lane, Cooksbridge be designated as the Polling Place for Polling Districts LAC and LPD and that no change be made to Polling Districts LAA, LPA, LPB and LPC.

10. Lewes Castle Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LGA – Lewes Castle (part)	Landport Community Room, Horsfield Road, Lewes
LGB – Lewes Castle (part)	TheTown Hall, Fisher Street, Lewes
LGC – Lewes Castle (part)	St Marys Social Centre, Christie Road, Lewes

Prior to 2005 electors from polling district LGA voted at Lewes Youth Centre, Landport Road, Lewes. As this venue was closed for refurbishment in 2007 it was necessary to move to Landport Community Room in Horsfield Road but it is only large enough for one polling station. Now that Lewes Youth Centre has been refurbished the Returning Officer proposes that Lewes Youth Centre be used for future elections as it can accommodate two polling stations as polling district LGA has 1465 electors.

It is recommended that Lewes Youth Centre, Landport Road be designated as the Polling Place for Polling District LGA and that no change be made to Polling Districts LGB and LGC.

11. Lewes Priory Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LHA – Lewes Priory (part)	St Marys Social Centre, Christie Road, Lewes
LHB – Lewes Priory (part)	Christ Church/United Reformed Church Hall, Fitzjohn Road, Lewes
LHC – Lewes Priory (part)	Southover Grange, Southover High Street, Lewes

Councillor O’Keeffe suggested possibly changing the polling venue for some of the electors in the Winterbourne area (who previously voted at the Canon O’Donnell Community Centre in Western Road (now closed) and who now vote at Christ Church/United Reformed Church Hall in Fitzjohn Road) to St Michaels Church Hall in High Street.

The election staff visited St Michaels Church Hall and the room we could use would only be big enough for one polling station also there are steps up into the main entrance and the side entrance for disabled access also has a step. In addition the entrance is not wide enough for electors in wheelchairs. The building is also located in Lewes Castle Ward and overall it is not considered to be a suitable venue for a polling station.

The Council has been notified that the current polling venue Southover Grange, Southover High Street, Lewes may no longer be available for use in the future as a polling station for electors in polling district LHC.

The Returning Officer has considered venues that could be designated as a Polling Place and has concluded that the nearby Western Road School, Southover High Street (located opposite the existing venue) would be a suitable alternative. The school has a good sized hall which could be used for two Polling Stations and also has disabled access along with off street parking which has been a problem at Southover Grange in the past for polling staff. The use of Schools is not always desirable as it may mean that the School has to close for the day. However, with the exception of UK Parliamentary elections and by-elections, most election dates are known well in advance. This would enable sufficient notice to be given to the School so they could plan accordingly.

It is recommended that the Western Road School, Southover High Street be designated as the Polling Place for Polling District LHC and that no change to be made to Polling Districts LHA and LHB.

12. Newhaven Valley Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LJA – Newhaven Valley (part)	Baptist Church Hall, Church Hill, Newhaven
LJB – Newhaven Valley (part)	Social Centre, Lewes Road, Newhaven

Councillor Saunders suggested possibly changing the polling venues at Baptist Church Hall, Church Hill and the Social Centre, Lewes Road to the Denton Island Buildings.

Election staff visited the Denton Island Buildings and the largest rooms we could use there are not big enough to use as polling stations. Also this venue would geographically be further for most electors to cast their vote and we feel it is not really practicable to move to this venue.

It is recommended that there to be no changes to the polling venues in this ward.

13. Peacehaven East Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LMA – Peacehaven East (part)	Scout Headquarters, Arundel Road, Peacehaven
LMB – Peacehaven East (part)	Evangelical Free Church Hall, Mayfield Avenue, Peacehaven
LMC – Peacehaven East (part)	The Ashington Room, Ashington Gardens, Peacehaven

We have received comments at past elections about the disabled access at the Scout Headquarters, Arundel Road, Peacehaven. The election staff visited the premises along with Mr Turner from Southern Mobility Centres Ltd and his view was there was no problem with the surface inside the gates of the premises, but it was the road surface outside the entrance that was the problem. As there is no suitable alternative venue that could be used in this ward, the Scout Headquarters will remain as the polling venue for polling district LMA.

It is recommended that there be no changes to the polling venues in this ward.

14. Peacehaven North Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LNA - Peacehaven North (part)	Meridian C P School, Roderick Avenue North, Peacehaven
LNB – Peacehaven North (part)	The Annexe Room, Meridian C P School, Peacehaven

Mrs J Couture (Labour Party) suggested possibly moving Polling District LNA to the Meridian Centre, Meridian Way, Peacehaven.

The Meridian Centre is located outside the Peacehaven North Polling District and it is geographically further to go for all electors. The electors from Polling District Peacehaven West (LOC) already vote there and it is not logical to move the polling station outside of the ward.

It is recommended that there to be no changes to the polling venues in this ward.

15. Seaford Central & West Wards

Current designations for these Wards are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LQA – Seaford Central (part)	Cross Way Christian Community Centre, Clinton Place, Seaford
LQB – Seaford Central (part)	Seaford Baptist Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Seaford
LUA – Seaford West	Seaford Baptist Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Seaford

Councillor Nicholson submitted the following comment:

“It is difficult for many people in Bishopstone who vote at Seaford Baptist Church Hall.”

Unfortunately, there is no other obvious building in the LUA Polling District that is suitable as designation as a Polling Place.

These Wards share a Polling Place at Seaford Baptist Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Seaford. There are 3905 voters from LUA – Seaford West Polling District and 1297 voters from the LQB – Seaford Central Polling District making a total of 5202 for this Polling Place. Comments have previously been made that this is a large busy venue and that the two halls are not large enough to cope with the numbers of voters for a Polling Place catering for different electoral areas.

The Returning Officer has considered venues that could be designated as a Polling Place and has concluded that the nearby Claremont Hall, Brooklyn Road is a suitable alternative. The venue has a good sized hall (which was last used as a polling station in 1997) has disabled access and could accommodate the 1297 electors from Polling District LQB. The electors from Polling District LUA would continue to vote at the Seaford Baptist Church Hall.

It is recommended that the Claremont Hall, Brooklyn Road be designated as the Polling Place for Polling District LQB and that the electors from Polling District LUA continue to vote at the Seaford Baptist Church Hall. It is also recommended that no change be made to Polling Districts LQA and LUA.

16. Seaford East & South Wards

Current designations for these Wards are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LRA – Seaford East (part)	St Lukes Church Hall, Walmer Road, Seaford
LRB – Seaford East (part)	Anney R C School, Sutton Avenue, Seaford
LTA - Seaford South (part)	Anney R C School, Sutton Avenue, Seaford
LTB – Seaford South (part)	Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford

Councillor Nicholson submitted the following comments:

“the fact that the electors of LRB have to go out of their area by some distance to vote at Anney School could be looked at”

Councillor Murphy submitted the following comments:

“Anney School proved to be a major problem at the May 2007 elections. Disabled access was a problem and this polling station is way outside the polling district LRB.”

“Seaford South ward LTB is a small polling district with good access for the disabled but including this small number of people in with the people from the North ward voting at the Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road causes logistical problems.”

Although shared stations are not ideal, the electors are geographically close to the Downs Leisure Centre and it would not seem logical to move them to another venue. Also this polling district cannot be combined with Seaford North (LSA) as it has different County Divisions.

These Wards share a Polling Place at the Annecy R C School, Sutton Avenue, Seaford. There are 3151 voters from LTA – Seaford South Polling District and 1201 voters from LRB – Seaford East Polling District making a total of 4352 for this Polling Place. Comments have previously been made that this is a busy venue (with not very good access) and that the single hall is not large enough to cope with the numbers of voters for a Polling Place catering for different electoral areas. The previous venue Newlands Court, Southdown Road can no longer be used as it is up for sale as re development.

The Returning Officer has considered venues that could be designated as a Polling Place and has concluded that the nearby Seaford Head Community College, Sutton Avenue, Seaford (last used as a polling venue in 1993) is a suitable alternative. The School has two good sized adjacent rooms which could accommodate two polling stations each and good disabled access. Although it is geographically not as central to the polling district LTA as Annecy R C School was it is closer for the electors in polling district LRB.

It is recommended that the Seaford Head Community College, Sutton Avenue, Seaford be designated as the Polling Place for Polling Districts LRB and LTA and that no change be made in respect of Polling Districts LRA and LTB.

17. Seaford North Ward

Current designations for this Ward are:

Polling District	Polling Place
LSA – Seaford North (part)	Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford
LSB – Seaford North (part)	Cradle Hill C P School, Lexden Road, Seaford

Councillor Collict and Councillor Willis suggested that certain electors in Lexden Road from polling district LSA (odd numbers 1-7 & 23-43) (22 electors) currently voting at the Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford should instead vote at Cradle Hill C P School, Lexden Road, Seaford (polling district LSB). This suggestion seems logical as the polling station would be geographically closer for these electors and all other electors in Lexden Road already vote there.

It is recommended that Cradle Hill C P School, Lexden Road, Seaford be designated as the Polling Place for electors in Lexden Road (odd numbers 1-7 & 23-43) from Poling district LSA and that no change be made to Polling district LSB.

Conclusion

18. **It is recommended that the proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places in Table 2 be approved.**

Table 2

Polling District and Polling Place Designations – Wards where there is a Combination of Changes and No Changes		
Ward	Polling District	Polling Place (Note 1)
Barcombe and Hamsey	LAC – Hamsey	Beechwood Hall, Beechwood Lane, Cooksbridge
	LAA – Barcombe	To remain as Barcombe Village Hall
Lewes Castle	LGA – Lewes Castle (part)	Lewes Youth Centre, Landport Road, Lewes
	LGB – Lewes Castle (part)	To remain as The Town Hall, Fisher Street, Lewes
	LGC – Lewes Castle (part)	To remain as St Marys Social Centre, Christie Road, Lewes
Lewes Priory	LHC – Lewes Priory (part)	Western Road School, Southover High Street, Lewes
	LHA – Lewes Priory (part)	To remain as St Marys Social Centre, Christie Road, Lewes
	LHB – Lewes Priory (part)	To remain as Christ Church/United Reformed Church Hall, Fitzjohn Road, Lewes
Newhaven Valley	LJA – Newhaven Valley (part)	To remain as Baptist Church Hall, Church Hill, Newhaven
	LJB – Newhaven Valley (part)	To remain as Social Centre, Lewes Road, Newhaven
Peacehaven East	LMA – Peacehaven East (part)	To remain as Scout Headquarters, Arundel Road, Peacehaven
	LMB – Peacehaven East (part)	To remain as Evangelical Free Church Hall, Mayfield Avenue, Peacehaven
	LMC – Peacehaven East (part)	To remain as The Ashington Room, Ashington Gardens, Peacehaven
Peacehaven North	LNA – Peacehaven North (part)	To remain as Meridian C P School, Roderick Avenue North, Peacehaven
	LNB – Peacehaven North (part)	To remain as The Annexe Room, Meridian C P School, Roderick Avenue North, Peacehaven
Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St John (without)	LPD – St John (without)	Beechwood Hall, Beechwood Lane, Cooksbridge
	LPA – Plumpton)	To remain as Village Hall, West Gate, Plumpton
	LPB – Streat)	
	LPC – East Chiltington	To remain as The Jolly Sportsman, Chapel Lane, East Chiltington
Seaford Central	LQB – Seaford Central (part)	Claremont Hall, Brooklyn Road, Seaford
	LQA – Seaford Central (part)	To remain as Cross Way Christian Community Centre, Clinton Place, Seaford
Seaford East	LRB – Seaford East (part)	Seaford Head Community College, Sutton Avenue, Seaford
	LRA – Seaford East (part)	To remain as St Lukes Church Hall,

		Walmer Road, Seaford
Seaford North	LSA – Seaford North (part) Lexden Road (odd numbers 1-7 & 23-43 only)	Cradle Hill C P School, Lexden Road, Seaford
	LSA – Seaford North (part) (excluding Lexden Road (odd numbers 1-7 & 23-43))	To remain as The Downs leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford
	LSB – Seaford North (part)	To remain as The Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford
Seaford South	LTA – Seaford South (part)	Seaford Head Community College, Sutton Avenue, Seaford
	LTB – Seaford South (part)	To remain as the Downs Leisure Centre, Sutton Road, Seaford
Seaford West	LUA – Seaford West	To remain as Baptist Church Hall, Belgrave Road, Seaford

Note 1. The Council has previously designated the polling place as being the polling district. However, this is now discouraged by the Representation of the People Act 1983 which suggests that the polling places should be defined. The polling places have therefore been defined as the polling stations.

19. Where a change in Poling Place and Polling Station is made, residents will be notified of the change by letter well in advance of the next scheduled elections. A reminder of the change will also be included on the poll cards for those areas at the next elections.
20. Copies of this Report have been sent to the original consultees and any further comments received will be reported at the meeting. Lewes District Councillors will receive the report as part of the Council agenda.

Financial Appraisal

21. There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.

Environmental Implications

22. I have completed the Environmental Implications Questionnaire and there are no significant effects as a result of this recommendation.

Risk Management Implications

23. I have completed the Risk Management questionnaire and this Report does not require a risk assessment because the issue covered by this report is not significant in terms of risk.

Background Papers

24. Various correspondence

Appendices

25. None