

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Interim Review of Polling Districts and Places</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Council on 17 February 2022
<b>WARD</b>	Hillside; Maiden Erlegh;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andrew Moulton - Returning Officer

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

To ensure suitable permanent polling places are designated for electors in Hillside and Maiden Erlegh wards and to alleviate the impact of polling on schools in the relevant wards.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Returning Officer for Wokingham has reviewed the polling districts and polling places and recommends that Council agree the following permanent re-designations:

- 1) Hillside Ward: Lower Earley Library to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling district EDW.
- 2) Maiden Erlegh Ward: Earley St Peters Church Hall to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling districts EFW & EGW.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Following the May 2021 elections the Council has carried out an interim review of polling districts and places for Hillside and Maiden Erlegh wards. The Returning Officer recommends that:

- Hillside Ward: Lower Earley Library to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling district EDW.
- Maiden Erlegh Ward: Earley St Peters Church Hall to be designated as the polling place for all elections for polling districts EFW & EGW.

## **Background**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a statutory requirement for councils to conduct a review of polling places every four years but also at any other time if a building becomes unavailable or if any changes are identified following an election.

The current buildings used as polling stations in polling districts EDW (Hillside Ward) and EFW & EGW (Maiden Erlegh Ward) are Hillside School and Aldryngton School respectively.

Following the recommendation and encouragement from the Government to not use schools as a polling station in May 2021 this review seeks to confirm those alternative venues that were found and used instead of the schools. Both of the proposed polling places have good parking and access, are in good locations and well known to electors. They were successfully used as polling places during elections held in May 2021 and deemed to be suitable venues for polling.

The Council began this interim review on 29 November 2021 and the opportunity was provided for interested parties to make a representation until 10 January 2022.

A notice of the review was published on the Council's website. A copy was also sent to all relevant ward members, relevant polling places and other interested individuals and organisations.

Other than the Returning Officer's recommendations, no further representations were received.

## **Analysis of Issues**

In designating Polling Places, certain rules have to be followed by the Council under the 1983 Act. These include that:

- (i) all electors must be given 'such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances'
- (ii) so far as is reasonable and practicable, only places which are accessible to electors who are disabled should be designated, and ...
- (iii) the Polling Place should be within the Polling District except where special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the Polling District.

Consideration of the above rules have been taken into account when considering alternative venues.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Cross-Council Implications**

None.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

A completed Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix A.

**Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030**

There will be no impact on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

### **List of Background Papers**

Notice of Interim Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2021  
Acting Returning Officer's Representation

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