

**Item 5(c) – Polling District and Polling Places Review 2011**  
**The Electoral Arrangements Committee’s Recommendations to Council**

At its meeting on 27 October 2011 the Electoral Arrangements Committee considered the matter as follows:

“The Electoral Services Manager presented a report which advised the Committee that the Council was required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places at least once every four years under the Electoral Administration Act 2006. The last review had been completed in 2007 and a review therefore had to be completed by the end of December 2011. The requirement to divide the district into polling districts for the purposes of elections and to provide a polling place for every district that was easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities, was highlighted. The report also explained the Council’s practice of avoiding the use of school premises wherever possible to minimise disruption to school activities along with the intention that temporary stations should not be used on grounds of expense and that no more than 1800 electors should be allocated to a polling station. The Polling Districts and Polling Places Review process was outlined along with the timetable for the conclusion of the review. As part of this notice of the review had been given as required in the regulations, the Returning Officer had provided comments on the existing polling station locations and there had been public consultation which had invited comments from a number of organisations including parish councils, District and County Councillors, local political associations and all local government electors. This consultation period had begun on 22 August and ended on 7 October 2011. The responses to the consultation were contained in Appendix A to the report.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that investigations had been carried out in six polling districts in an effort to secure permanent changes to existing venues and the options and recommendations in respect of each polling district and polling place were outlined, along with the reasons for the recommendations, in Appendix B to the report. Very few changes were proposed although it was recognised that not all locations were ideal but some were used due to lack of suitable alternatives or the non-availability of venues. It was proposed that the venues used for the 2011 elections should be retained with the exception of the East Hill and Knatts Valley Polling Districts where it was proposed to locate a double station at Woodlands Manor Golf Club where there were good parking facilities, and West Kingsdown (East) where the function room in The Portobello Inn would replace the Village Hall, which was no longer available. Enquiries had also been made about the possibility of returning to use Knole Academy East (the former Wildernesse School) as a polling place for Hillingdon and Wildernesse Polling Districts, which had not been available in 2011, and it had been confirmed that this venue could be used in future. It was therefore recommended that this should be included in the proposals contained in Appendix B to the report and the recommendations to be approved by the Council on 29 November 2011. The Electoral Services Manager stressed that the Council kept the position under review and that if more appropriate venues emerged in any of the polling districts these could be considered at any time and for this reason the review

had not identified a need for many changes. It was accepted that polling arrangements in Birchwood and Kemsing West were not ideal but that these would be kept under review.

Councillor Brookbank expressed his concern at the polling arrangements made for Birchwood Polling District at the General Election but accepted that the arrangements applied at the 2011 Elections, when Birchwood electors polled at the White Oak Bowls Centre, had been better but still wondered whether a temporary polling station might be an option. Members noted that an approach had been made to the manager of the new hotel at Birchwood as a possible polling location but that this had been turned down. Councillor Mrs Hunter offered to contact the owners, Whitbreads, at a more senior level to see whether they might reconsider this position.

**Resolved: That it be recommended to the Council that**

**(1) the proposed polling scheme contained in Appendix B to the report, as amended and attached to these minutes, be approved; and**

**(2) the timetable in paragraph 9 of the report (in relation to the next phase of the review) be adopted”.**

**Note: Text in bold type represents a recommendation to the Council.**