



## **ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

**27 October 2011 at 7.00 pm**  
***Conference Room - Council Office***

### **AGENDA**

#### **Membership:**

Cllrs: Cllr. K S Bayley, Cllr. Mrs P Bosley, Cllr. R Brookbank, Cllr. Mrs C Clark,  
Cllr Mrs J Davison, Cllr. J Grint, Cllr Ms M Lowe and Cllr. Mrs J Sargeant

1. **To elect a Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal year**
2. **To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal year**
3. **Declarations of interest**
4. **Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 September 2010** (Pages 1 - 2)
5. **Polling Districts and Polling Places Review** (Pages 3 - 28)  
*Ian Bigwood*
6. **Community Governance Review** (Pages 29 - 36)  
*Ian Bigwood*

### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Director or Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

**The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)**

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**ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee held on  
2 September 2010 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllr. Mrs Hunter (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Brookbank, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Davison, Harrod, Mrs. Lowe and Mrs. Morris.

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Mrs. Purves.

Cllr. Bruce was also present.

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Fleming be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved: That Cllr. Mrs. Hunter be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. ASH WARD – NAME CHANGE (REPORT 5)

Members noted that this proposal had been consulted on thoroughly and that no objections had been received. They also noted that New Ash Green was the largest settlement in the ward and that it was therefore sensible to make mention of it in the name.

Resolved: That Council be recommended to change the name of the Ash Ward of the Sevenoaks District Council to Ash and New Ash Green Ward with effect from the next full elections to the Sevenoaks District Council to be held on 5 May 2011.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.37 P.M.

Chairman



## POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

### Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27 October 2011

Report of the: Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources

Status: For Decision

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**Executive Summary:** Legislation requires district councils to review the polling districts and polling places within its area by the end of 2011. This report outlines the existing and proposed scheme for the Sevenoaks District Council area.

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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Mrs. Bracken

**Head of Service** Head of Legal – Mrs. Christine Nuttall

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### Recommendation to Electoral Arrangements Committee

- (a) the proposed polling scheme as shown in Appendix B be approved; and
- (b) the timetable in paragraph 9 (in relation to the next phase of the review) be adopted.

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**Reason for Recommendation:** a review of polling districts and polling places is required by law to be carried out in 2011.

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### Introduction

- 1 The District Council completed a review of polling districts and polling places at the end of 2007 as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006. A district council must complete a further review before the end of the period of four years starting with the completion of the previous review.
- 2 The process for conducting the review is further explained in the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006. Although the legislation refers specifically to parliamentary elections, the Electoral Commission (EC) advised (in its circular dated 26 June 2007) that such reviews should be conducted simultaneously with a review of local government arrangements. EC further advises that the polling districts and places for parliamentary elections and local government elections should always be the same and this is the case currently in Sevenoaks.
- 3 District councils are required to divide their area into polling districts for the purpose of elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts. The aim should be to provide a polling place for every polling district that is easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities. Each parish has to have a separate polling district.

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- 4 In Sevenoaks, we have taken the view over the years that we should avoid the use of school premises wherever possible because of the potential disruption to schooling. As a result, at the May 2011 elections only four schools were used as polling places and in each instance the school was able to continue as near normal. Also, when selecting new venues, consideration must be given to the assured availability of the premises even at short notice.
- 5 Wherever possible at polling places that have access issues, polling staff direct voters to an alternative entrance or set up ramps (where appropriate) in liaison with the caretaker of the premises.
- 6 As part of this review, the Returning Officer (RO) for the Sevenoaks District is required to comment upon the existing polling stations (i.e. the room or building where polling takes place) and upon any new proposals. Generally, the RO considers that no more than 1800 electors should be allocated to one polling station as it would be administratively difficult for the usual team of polling staff (comprising one presiding officer and two poll clerks) to handle more than this number. However, on the occasion of polling for multiple elections on the same day (as in 2011), the RO always reviews staffing levels.

### **The Process to Date**

- 7 Notice of the review was given on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011 in the following ways:
  - notice displayed at Council Offices in Sevenoaks and Swanley;
  - article on the District Council website;
  - local news release;
  - letter to Sevenoaks District Councillors and to Kent County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the Sevenoaks District Council area;
  - letter to the Dartford, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling Members of Parliament and to MEPs representing the South East Region;
  - letter to all parish councils within the Sevenoaks District;
  - local political associations in Dartford, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling parliamentary constituencies of the three main political parties;
  - the Acting Returning Officer for the Dartford and Tonbridge & Malling parliamentary constituencies.
- 8 The notice and articles invited electors within the Sevenoaks District and all the above consultees to submit representations by Friday, 7 October and these appear as Appendix A. Persons or bodies making representations were requested to give alternative places that may be used for polling.
- 9 The envisaged timetable for this review is as follows:

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- Commencement of review Monday, 22 August 2011
- Deadline for representations Friday, 7 October 2011
- Electoral Arrangements Committee Thursday, 27 October 2011
- Full Council Tuesday, 29 November 2011

Following approval by the District Council, the polling scheme will be published and representations will again be sought over a six week period. Subject to responses, further meetings of the Electoral Arrangements Committee will be arranged.

### **Options (and Reasons for the Recommendation)**

- 10 Appendix B contains details of electorates by polling district, the proposed polling place and reason for the choice and details of the number of polling stations at each polling place. Consideration has been given to any forthcoming developments in the Sevenoaks District that might affect electorates over the next few years. At the moment the only site that is likely to have any significant impact is the former West Kent Cold Store but it is hard to estimate when the anticipated increase in electorate will take effect. As with all new developments of any significant size, the impact will be kept under constant review. There is no need to wait until the next four yearly review before taking action.
- 11 Investigations have been carried out in six polling districts in an attempt to secure permanent changes to the existing venues:
  - (Sevenoaks) Hillingdon and (Sevenoaks) Wildernesse
  - (Swanley) Birchwood
  - (West Kingsdown) East Hill and (West Kingsdown) Knatts Valley
  - West Kingsdown East

### Hillingdon and Wildernesse Polling Districts

11. The former Wildernesse School was the venue for these polling districts at least since 1974. A classroom was used allowing the school to function. Following ward boundary changes in 2003, this venue has been situated outside the Hillingdon polling district but after extensive consultation, it was agreed that Hillingdon electors should continue to use this venue as well as electors from Wildernesse polling district (where the building is situated).
12. However, in May 2011 the venue (now Knole Academy East) was not available and electors for these two polling districts had to attend St. John's C.E.P. School in Kennedy Gardens which is also the venue for Holly Bush polling district. To have electors from three polling districts at one venue is not an ideal situation particularly at multiple elections, as in 2011.

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13. Enquiries have again been made of Knole Academy in order to return to this venue at future elections. Discussions are continuing and Members will be updated on progress at the meeting of the Committee.

### Birchwood Polling District

14. In recent years both the Birchwood School and its replacement Birchwood Public House have closed. Inquiries were made of the new hotel at Birchwood before the 2011 elections and again recently but they are adamant there is no accommodation available that is suitable for polling purposes. At the 2010 parliamentary general election Birchwood electors voted at the White Oak Leisure Centre; this venue was not ideal in itself and its close proximity to the polling venue for White Oak polling district (White Oak Bowls Centre) caused some confusion amongst the electorate.
15. In 2011, therefore, Birchwood electors polled at White Oak Bowls Centre, Hilda May Avenue. Whilst there were initial access difficulties due to security arrangements, overall this was a better arrangement than the year before. I will ensure the access issues are not repeated and therefore the 2011 arrangements should continue for the present. Long term arrangements for the Birchwood polling district will be kept under review.

### East Hill & Knatts Valley Polling Districts

16. For several years East Hill electors have had to poll at Woodlands Church Hall, Tinkerpot Lane, the same venue as Knatts Valley electors. As most electors will have to travel by car in order to vote, it is important to have car parking facilities: there are none at the current venue.
17. Enquiries have been made of the Woodlands Manor Golf Club, also in Tinkerpot Lane, which has ample car parking available. They are willing to accommodate a polling station and I recommend the use of these premises for both polling districts at future elections (using both the Church Hall and the Golf Club would cause elector confusion).

### West Kingsdown East Polling District

18. The West Kingsdown Village Hall, Fawkham Road is no longer available for use as a polling station. Enquiries have been made of The Portobello Inn, London Road (at the junction with Fawkham Road) and they are willing to accommodate a polling station in their Function Room. Access will be from the car park and a ramp will be provided to assist electors with disabilities, if appropriate. I recommend this change on a permanent basis.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

19. The permanent changes recommended to two polling venues are likely to lead to a very small saving in hire charges.



20. Investigations are underway to remedy the access difficulty at Edenbridge Scout HQ (Stangrove and South End polling district) at a maximum one-off cost of £150.

#### Community Impact and Outcomes

21. District councils are required to divide their area into polling districts for the purposes of elections and to designate polling places for these polling districts. The aim should be to provide a polling place for every polling district that is easily accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities.

#### Legal, Human Rights etc.

22. There are no legal or human rights implications in this report.

#### Resource (non-financial)

23. Staff input has been required to investigate alternative polling arrangements and will be required in order to keep polling arrangements under constant review.

#### Value For Money and Asset Management

24. Whenever there is a perceived lack of polling facilities within a polling district, suggestions are made by interested parties for the use of a temporary building. This involves the delivery and setting up of a “portacabin” containing furniture, ramp access, toilet facilities and a generator to provide electricity; there is also the security of these temporary structures to consider. Enquiries of neighbouring authorities indicate a cost of well over one thousand pounds for the use of each “portacabin”. I believe it is important on cost grounds, therefore, to try to find alternative solutions.

#### **Conclusions**

25. There have been many reviews of polling arrangements over the years, often as a result of boundary changes or the implementation of policies, e.g. alternatives to schools and an increase in the provision of polling places to encourage turn-out. In between, a constant watch is kept on providing the best facilities available. Not surprisingly, therefore, this review proposes a minimum of changes most of which have been enforced due to the non-availability of venues.

#### **Risk Assessment Statement**

26. Legislation requires district councils to carry out four yearly reviews, 2011 being a review year; there appears to be no legal sanction if this deadline is not met. Council approval of this report’s proposals ought to be obtained on 29 November 2011 and although representations upon the review may be received for six weeks after this date, the review itself will have been carried out within the timescale.

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27. Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (inserted by the Electoral Administration Act 2006) states

“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;

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”

28. Following the review in 2007, the Property Services section of the District Council investigated access arrangements at all polling places and keeps such matters under review in partnership with the RO. These matters need to be addressed otherwise the District Council may be criticised for its inaction.

**Background Papers:**

Electoral Administration Act 2006

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places  
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

Representation of the People Act 1983

Electoral Commission Circular EC28/2007

Files EL9 and EL10 in the Electoral Services  
section (providing history)

**Contact Officer(s):**

Ian Bigwood – ext. no.7242

**Dr. Pav Ramewal**  
**Corporate Resources Director**

**Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations****Responses to Consultation**

<b>Contributor</b>	<b>Details of Comments</b>	<b>Returning Officer's Response</b>
Chevening Parish Council	The Parish Council voted unanimously to retain polling at Chevening Church Hall.	
Edenbridge Town Council	<p>1. Edenbridge Scout HQ, Station Road, Edenbridge - difficult access for mobility buggy.</p> <p>2. Scout HQ and W.I. Hall - voter confusion due to close proximity of the two polling stations.</p> <p>3. Scout HQ – polling booths not wide enough for mobility buggy so impairing secrecy of the vote.</p>	<p>1. A ramp, specifically designed for the situation, is being constructed.</p> <p>2. The two polling places serve electors of different wards and, therefore, different polling districts. Legislation requires polling places to be within the polling district (except in special circumstances). It is unwise to have electors of different wards sharing the same premises as this leads to ballot papers being placed in the wrong ballot boxes and consequent difficulties at the counting of votes.</p> <p>3. Wider booths, already used at other locations, will be allocated to the Scout HQ in the future.</p>
Cllr John Scholey	Polling arrangements for Edenbridge North & East Ward are satisfactory.	
Halstead Parish Council	The Parish Council is pleased to note the retention of the Pavilion, Station Road, Halstead.	
Margaret Bown, Hartley resident	Approves of existing arrangements for All Saints Church Centre, Ash Road, Hartley (the hall is accessible).	
Seal Parish Council	The Parish Council and local District Councillors agree with the retention of the current polling places.	
Shoreham Parish Council	The Parish Council approves of the current	

	arrangements.	
Cllr Robert Brookbank	Birchwood (Swanley) polling district – Cllr Brookbank seeks a polling place within the polling district and suggests the new hotel at Birchwood.	Contact made with the hotel for second successive year; they are still of the opinion that the hotel does not have suitable accommodation and will not, therefore, offer their premises for polling purposes (see Appendix B).
Westerham Parish Council	The Parish Council is not aware of any problems or access difficulties with either of the two polling places serving the Parish.	
County Cllr Nick Chard	Supports the polling stations allocated to the Sevenoaks East County Electoral Division.	
Acting Returning Officer for Dartford Parliamentary Constituency	Satisfied with the current arrangements in respect of that part of the Dartford Parliamentary Constituency that lies within the Sevenoaks District Council area.	
Acting Returning Officer for Tonbridge & Malling Parliamentary Constituency	Although some venues (such as The Rock Public House) are not ideal, accepts there are no alternatives in the area; therefore, happy with proposals.	
Sevenoaks Liberal Democrats	<p>1. Kemsing polling districts – unsatisfactory for electors of Kemsing West to have to poll at St. Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing (situated in Kemsing East); however, unable to suggest alternative solution.</p> <p>2. St. John’s C.E.P. School, Kennedy Gardens, Sevenoaks – venue for voters of three polling districts at 2011 elections caused a lot of problems. Noted that this is a temporary arrangement.</p>	<p>1. Continue to seek for suitable polling place within the Kemsing West polling district (see Appendix B).</p> <p>2. Discussions taking place with Knole Academy East for a return to former Wildernesse School site for electors of Hillingdon and Wildernesse polling districts (see Appendix B).</p>
Tonbridge, Edenbridge & Malling Conservative Association	Supports the representations made about the disabled access difficulties at Edenbridge Scout HQ.	See above and Appendix B.

## Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

### Proposals by Sevenoaks District Council

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Ash (AA)	289	Ash Village Hall, The Street, Ash	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hodsoll Street & Ridley (AB)	452	Hodsoll Street & Ridley Village Hall, Hodsoll Street	In use at least since 1974 and situated in the heart of Hodsoll Street Village (though some distance from other community off the Gravesend Road).	1	Electorate warrants only one station
New Ash Green North West (AC)	2127	New Ash Green Youth Centre, Ash Road, New Ash Green	First used in 1981, replacing a mobile polling station situated elsewhere. Although located at one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800
New Ash Green South East (AD)	2321	New Ash Green Village Hall, Centre Road, New Ash Green	Replaced school in 1976. Although located to one end of the polling district it is still close to all electors.	2	Electors exceed 1800

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Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Brasted (AE)	763	Brasted Village Hall, High Street, Brasted	Replaced school in 1977. Well located in village but poor parking. Tried pavilion at recreation ground (better parking) at 1997 by-election but, overall, this did not find favour.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Toys Hill (AF)	371	Toys Hill Hall & Chancel Kitchen, Puddledock Lane, Toys Hill	Venue for new polling district since 2003. Previously, part of Brasted polling district which meant a very long journey to the polling station. Poor access only marginally improved by setting up polling station in kitchen (so less steps) and providing hand rail. Not possible to install a ramp. Poll cards to electors state “Difficult access for disabled or infirm”.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chevening (AG)	2350	Chevening Church Hall, Homedean Road, Chipstead	In use at least since 1974. Located at one end of main body of electors in Chipstead and Bessels Green. Suggestion of separate polling district for Bessels Green did not find favour locally in 2002.	2	Electors exceed 1800

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Bough Beech (AH)	251	The Wheatsheaf at Bough Beech, Hever Road, Bough Beech	Venue since 2009 when Village Hall was no longer available. Central to the community and good parking facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Causeway (AI)	326	Chiddingstone Causeway Village Hall, Chiddingstone Causeway	To one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Hoath (AJ)	168	The Rock Inn Public House, Chiddingstone Hoath	Replaced dilapidated hall in 1981. Access not ideal and site is to one end of polling district but no known alternative in rural area.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Chiddingstone Village (AK)	205	Chiddingstone Primary School, Chiddingstone Village	Well located. School prefers this arrangement to the alternative of adjacent parish hall as latter is used by school for meals.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Cowden (AL)	650	Cowden Memorial Hall, Chantlers Mead, Cowden	Replaced school (closed down) in 1983. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Crockenhill (AM)	1326	Crockenhill Village Hall, Stones Cross Road, Crockenhill	Replaced school in 1981. Quite central to the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Dunton Green (AN)	1723	Dunton Green Village Hall, London Road, Dunton Green	Replaced school in 1979. A little way away from the main body of electors but no alternatives have been suggested.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Marlpit Hill (AO)	1551	St. Paulinus Church Centre, Hillcrest Road, Edenbridge	Replaced Men’s Club in 1979. Well located in main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Marsh Green (AP)	358	St. John’s United Reformed Church, Marsh Green	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located close to main area of electorate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Pound Green (AQ)	1077	Edenbridge Sports Pavilion, Lingfield Road, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at edge of main body of electors but not aware of any alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Spitals Cross (AR)	1194	Fircroft Tenants & Residents Association, Farmstead Drive, Edenbridge	Venue for new polling district since review of Edenbridge polling arrangements in 1997. Located at the heart of the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Stangrove & South End (AS)	1781	Edenbridge Scout HQ, Station Road, Edenbridge	New site in 2003 after changes to District Ward boundaries. Not quite central to elongated polling district. Small step access – purpose built ramp being provided.	1	Electorate warrants only one station



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Town (Edenbridge) (AT)	880	Edenbridge W.I.Hall, Station Road, Edenbridge	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Quite well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Eynsford (AU)	1461	Eynsford Village Hall, High Street, Eynsford	Replaced school in 1981. Central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Farningham (AV)	1088	Farningham Village Hall, High Street, Farningham	In use at least since 1974 and well located in the village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Fawkham (AW)	475	Fawkham Village Hall, Valley Road, Fawkham	Central within Parish. Good parking. Replaced school in 1977.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Halstead (AX)	1265	Halstead Pavilion, Station Road, Halstead	Replaced parish hall in 1997. Though not as central in village, it does provide better parking and facilities.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hartley North (AY)	2219	Longfield & Hartley Scout HQ, Larkwell Lane, Hartley	Well located within polling district. First used in 1987 following boundary changes.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Hartley South (AZ)	2200	All Saints Church Centre, Ash Road, Hartley	Well located within polling district. Good parking. Replaced school in 1976.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Four Elms (BA)	459	Four Elms Village Hall, Ide Hill Road, Four Elms	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Hever (BB)	503	Hever Village Hall, Hever Road, Hever	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Ramp provided by owners.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hextable (BC)	3433	St. Peter’s Church Hall, College Road, Hextable	In use at least since 1974. Very well located.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Horton Kirby (BD)	974	Fighting Cocks Public House, The Street, Horton Kirby	Replaced school in 1995. Electors enter via rear of building; disabled access via the bar. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
South Darenth (BE)	1704	Horton Kirby & South Darenth Village Hall, Horton Road, South Darenth	Replaced fire station (poor facilities) in 1981. Although outside village, no known alternative.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Kemsing East & Kemsing West (BF/BG)	1700/1601	The St. Edith Hall, High Street, Kemsing	Replaced school in 1981. Good facilities but situated at eastern end of village. Second polling district created in 1999 for the western end and polling took place at the Town Church, Dynes Road, but Town Church pulled down in 2000. The Dynes Residential Care Home was used on one occasion but is no longer available. Retain two polling districts and continue to seek polling place for western end.	2	One polling station for each of the two polling districts
Knockholt (BH)	989	Knockholt Village Centre, Main Road, Knockholt	In use at least since 1974. Good parking. At edge of village but close to the main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Leigh (BI)	1452	Leigh Small Village Hall, High Street, Leigh	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1977. Ramp provided by owners. Located in village; some distance from electors in the communities of Charcott and Powdermills but no known alternatives available in these rural areas.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Otford (BJ)	2673	Otford Village Memorial Hall, High Street, Otford	Replaced school in 1981. Centrally located, good facilities.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Fordcombe (BK)	591	Fordcombe Village Hall, Fordcombe	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Well located in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Penshurst (BL)	764	Penshurst Village Hall, Penshurst	Replaced school (no longer wished to be used) in 1981. Good location in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Riverhead (BM)	1890	Riverhead Village Hall, Amherst Hill, Riverhead	Replaced school in 1979. Central site but no parking; not aware of any alternatives.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Seal – St. Lawrence (BN)	377	St. Lawrence Village Hall, Church Road, Stone Street	New site in 1991 after creation of new Parish Ward. Well positioned in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Seal (BO)	1323	Seal Village Hall, High Street, Seal	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Underriver (BP)	271	Underriver Village Hall, Carters Hill, Underriver	Replaced school (probably in 1979). Situated in village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Bat & Ball (BQ)	842	Sevenoaks Community Centre, Otford Road, Sevenoaks	This polling district was most recently altered in 2003 as a result of the Periodic Electoral Review (PER). This polling place has been used since 1984; good parking and access and close to main body of electors.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Bradbourne (BR)	1241	Sevenoaks Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	Minimal change to polling district in 2003 following PER. Previous venue at a mobile classroom in the grounds of the former Bradbourne School (now Knole Academy West) was not suitable for voters with disabilities. In the absence of any alternative in the polling district, the offices of the Sevenoaks Town Council have been used since 2003. Whilst this venue is located outside the polling district, it is not much further for voters to travel than the former venue.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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<b>Polling district (&amp; letters)</b>	<b>Electorate - August 2011</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>	<b>Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)</b>	<b>No. of polling stations</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Greatness (BS)	1184	Greatness Club House, Mill Lane, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. John Ambulance Hall in 1993 (which had difficult access). Central to polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
High Street (Sevenoaks) (BT)	1331	The STAG Community Arts Centre (Plaza Suite), London Road, Sevenoaks	Replaced St. Nicholas Parish Hall (demolished) in 1997. Good access and well located within polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Hillingdon (BU)	1295	To be confirmed.	The former Wildernesse School, in use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. Since 2003 PER, situated outside polling district but after extensive consultation, agreed that voters should continue to use this venue. As Knole Academy East, not available in 2011 but discussions have resumed to try to identify suitable accommodation on the site.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Holly Bush (BV)	1777	St. John’s C.E.P. School, Kennedy Gardens, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1981. School able to function. After 2003 PER, preferred option over St. John’s Church Hall (St. John’s Hill/Quakers Hall Lane).	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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<b>Polling district (&amp; letters)</b>	<b>Electorate - August 2011</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>	<b>Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)</b>	<b>No. of polling stations</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Kippington North (BW)	1094	Christ Church United Reformed Church, Littlecourt Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue used for the first time in 2003. Access and parking o.k.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Kippington South (BX)	1149	Kippington Community Centre, Kippington Road, Sevenoaks	Revised polling district in 2003 (following PER) to accommodate as many electors as possible. Venue in use at least since 1981; newly built in 2004. Good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Lower St. John’s (BY)	881	British Red Cross Centre, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and parking and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Common (BZ)	1458	Solefield School, Solefields Road, Sevenoaks	In use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. There are steps and a narrow entrance which makes access less than ideal.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Tubs Hill (CA)	1254	St. Luke’s Church Hall, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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<b>Polling district (&amp; letters)</b>	<b>Electorate - August 2011</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>	<b>Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)</b>	<b>No. of polling stations</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Upper St. John’s (CB)	1404	United Reformed Church, St. John’s Road, Sevenoaks	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; good access, only on-street parking. Located slightly to one side of polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Wilderness (CC)	308	To be confirmed.	The former Wilderness School, in use at least since 1974. Classroom used, so school able to function. As Knole Academy East, not available in 2011 but discussions have resumed to try to identify suitable accommodation on the site.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sevenoaks Weald (CD)	974	Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Road, Sevenoaks Weald	Venue in use since 1983, replacing school. Centrally located within village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Badgers Mount (CE)	537	Badgers Mount Memorial Hall, Orpington-By-Pass, Badgers Mount	In use at least since 1974. Close to main body of voters.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Shoreham (CF)	894	Shoreham Village Hall, High Street, Shoreham	Replaced school in 1977. Good access and well located.	1	Electorate warrants only one station



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Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
Well Hill (CG)	215	Well Hill Mission Church, Well Hill	New polling district following 2003 PER. Venue in use since 2003; Residents’ Association preferred location over public house alternative. Not the best access to the building or into the building but preferable to voters journeying long distances into Shoreham village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Ide Hill (CH)	525	Ide Hill Village Hall (Wheatsheaf Room), Ide Hill	Replaced school in 1985. Quite close to village; good parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Sundridge (CI)	1002	Sundridge Village Hall, Main Road, Sundridge	In use at least since 1974. Quite central to village.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Birchwood (CJ)	1023	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrols Close, Swanley	Two former venues (Birchwood School and Birchwood Public House) are both closed. White Oak Leisure Centre was used in 2010 but was not popular. New hotel at Birchwood not available/not suitable. In 2011, White Oak Bowls Centre was used; propose to continue this arrangement until a suitable site is found within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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<b>Polling district (&amp; letters)</b>	<b>Electorate - August 2011</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>	<b>Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)</b>	<b>No. of polling stations</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Christ Church (CK)	2038	Christ Church Centre, Kingswood Avenue, Swanley	Replaced school in 1981. Good location; separate polling booth provided for voters with disabilities so as to avoid steps inside the building. Limited on-street parking opposite with a two hour waiting restriction; blue badge holders can park outside hall.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
High Firs (CL)	2100	High Firs Primary School, Court Crescent, Swanley	In use at least since 1981. Classroom used, so school able to function. Good location.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
St. Mary’s (CM)	3238	Swanley Youth Centre, St. Mary’s Road, Swanley	In use since 1985. Located to one end of polling district but no known alternative closer to a central point.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Swanley Lane (CN)	1633	Swanley ACF Hall, Swanley Lane, Swanley	In use at least since 1974. Located at the extremity of the polling district but convenient for voters on their way to the station and shops. Rough ground on approach to hall. No alternative within the polling district.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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<b>Polling district (&amp; letters)</b>	<b>Electorate - August 2011</b>	<b>Proposed polling place</b>	<b>Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)</b>	<b>No. of polling stations</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Swanley Village (CO)	342	The Lamb Inn, Swanley Village Road, Swanley Village	In use since 2005. Located a little to one end of village, quite good access, some parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
White Oak (CP)	2062	White Oak Bowls Centre, Garrolds Close, Swanley	In use since 1999. Quite well located, good access, parking available.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800
Crockham Hill (CQ)	584	Crockham Hill Village Hall, Crockham Hill	In use since 1997, after demolition of WI Hall. Located close to main body of voters with good access and parking.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Westerham (CR)	2899	Westerham Hall, Quebec Avenue, Westerham	In use at least since 1974 (excepting for a few years during re-construction and because of prior bookings). Quite central to village, good access and parking.	2	Electorate exceeds 1800

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Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
East Hill (CS)	266	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	<b>New</b> - For several years East Hill electors have had to poll at Woodlands Church Hall, Tinkerpot Lane, the same venue as Knatts Valley electors. As most electors will have to travel by car in order to vote, it is important to have car parking facilities and there are none at the current venue. Woodlands Manor Golf Club, also in Tinkerpot Lane, has ample car parking and is willing to accommodate a polling station.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
Knatts Valley (CT)	216	Woodlands Manor Golf Club, Tinkerpot Lane, West Kingsdown	<b>New</b> – sensible for Knatts Valley electors to also attend these premises as using both the Woodlands Church Hall and the Golf Club would cause elector confusion.	1	Electorate warrants only one station

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Polling district (& letters)	Electorate - August 2011	Proposed polling place	Reason for choice (all are existing unless shown as “new”)	No. of polling stations	Reason
West Kingsdown East (CU)	1205	The Portobello Inn, London Road, West Kingsdown	<b>New</b> – West Kingsdown Village Hall no longer available. The Portobello Inn, London Road (at the junction with Fawkham Road) are willing to accommodate a polling station in their Function Room. Access will be from the car park and a ramp will be provided to assist electors with disabilities, if appropriate.	1	Electorate warrants only one station
West Kingsdown – Hever (CV)	2718	The Pavilion, London Road, West Kingsdown	In use since 1999. Not well located, being on the opposite side of the A20 from most voters, but provides a solution after many years of poor provision for this polling district. We provide temporary outside lighting.	1	Although electorate warrants it, there is insufficient space to provide 2 polling stations. Instead, extra polling staff are appointed to share out duties. Due to a potential triple poll in 2011, a second polling station was set up in the adjacent Library for the evening period of polling and this is a solution in similar future circumstances.



## COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

### Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27 October 2011

Report of the: Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Resources

Status: For Decision

Key Decision: No

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**Executive Summary:** Government and Electoral Commission guidance recommends that district councils review the boundaries and electoral arrangements of parishes every 10-15 years. The previous review was completed in 1999. A review must conclude within 12 months of its commencement.

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**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Mrs Bracken

**Head of Service** Head of Legal – Mrs Christine Nuttall

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#### **Recommendation to Electoral Arrangements Committee:**

- (a) a community governance review be undertaken;
  - (b) the terms of reference (see Appendix) be adopted; and
  - (c) the timetable for the review, outlined in paragraph 5, be adopted.
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**Reason for recommendations:** It is timely to conduct a review now in accordance with Government and Electoral Commission guidance. The suggested timetable meets the requirement of completing a review within 12 months of its commencement.

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#### **Introduction**

- 1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIH) 2007 devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. With effect from February 2008, district councils have had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews (formerly known as parish reviews) and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, councils need to take account of the views of local people.
- 2 Councils are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. Guidance suggests that it is good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a review every 10-15

years. In Sevenoaks, the last review was completed in 1999 and so it is timely to conduct a fresh review. There is an opportunity now, ahead of any scheduled elections, to conduct this review and have any recommendations implemented at the next full parish council elections in May 2015. If any recommendations by the District Council to change parish boundaries affect also the boundaries of District wards or Kent County Council electoral divisions, the Electoral Commission will give effect to those changes.

### **The Sevenoaks District Council Approach**

- 3 At previous parish reviews, the District Council has taken the view that it is for local people or local groups to suggest changes to the existing set-up. The District Council does not initiate changes but must, ultimately, decide upon any conflicting proposals. It has always placed great store upon proposals having the fullest backing of the local community and neighbouring parishes that may be affected. It will be expected therefore that any submissions to the District Council, which must be in writing, will state what consultations have been held with affected persons or groups and the outcome of those consultations.

### **Actions**

- 3 The LGPIH requires the District Council to draw up terms of reference for a community governance review. The review begins when the District Council publishes the terms of reference. The suggested terms are attached as the Appendix.
- 4 The District Council must ensure that interested persons or groups have the opportunity to input to the review and the following actions will be undertaken:
  - Display notice at the Council Offices in Sevenoaks and Swanley
  - Article on the District Council website
  - Article in In Shape
  - Local news release
  - Letter to all parish councils within the Sevenoaks District
  - Letter to other known community groups within the Sevenoaks District
  - Letter to Sevenoaks District Councillors and to Kent County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the Sevenoaks District Council area
  - Letter to Kent County Council
  - Letter to MPs representing constituencies within the Sevenoaks District
- 5 The review is concluded when the District Council publishes its recommendations and this must be within 12 months of the review's



## Agenda Item 6

### Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27 October 2011

commencement. The envisaged timetable is as follows (the start date being the day following full Council):

- Commencement of review Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011
- Deadline for submissions Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012
- Preparation of draft proposals followed by meeting of Electoral Arrangements Committee By end of March 2012
- Publication of the District Council's draft proposals Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012
- Consultation period concludes Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012
- Preparation of final proposals followed by meeting of Electoral Arrangements Committee Mid July 2012
- Full Council confirms final proposals July 2012
- The District Council publishes its recommendations August 2012
- Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements (next full parish council elections) Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

6. There are no cost implications for the District Council in conducting a community governance review apart from staff resources.

#### Community Impact and Outcomes

7. The District Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and is keen to ensure that parish governance in the Sevenoaks District continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges ahead. Government guidance states that "Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services."

## Agenda Item 6

Electoral Arrangements Committee – 27 October 2011

### Legal, Human Rights etc.

8. There are no legal or human rights implications in this report.

### Resource (non-financial)

9. Staff input will be required to co-ordinate submissions and present them to Members at future meetings of the Electoral Arrangements Committee.

### **Conclusions**

10. In accordance with Government guidance, a community governance review is due. There is an opportunity to conduct a review before the next scheduled major election (Police and Crime Commissioners on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012) and plenty of time to implement the outcome ahead of the next full parish council elections in 2015.

### **Risk Assessment Statement**

11. District Councils are expected to carry out community governance reviews every 10-15 years. If the opportunity is not taken now, staff resources may not be available until 2018, the next year of no scheduled elections.

### **Background Papers:**

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Local Government Act 1972

Guidance on community governance reviews (published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission) – April 2008

### **Contact Officer(s):**

Ian Bigwood – ext. no.7242

**Dr. Pav Ramewal**

**Corporate Resources Director**

## **Community Governance Review Terms of Reference**

Sevenoaks District Council has resolved to undertake a community governance review of the whole of the Sevenoaks District. The District Council will be guided by the relevant legislation and guidance, in particular the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (published jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission).

### **Why is the District Council undertaking the review?**

Government guidance recommends a review every 10-15 years. The last review was completed in 1999.

### **What is a community governance review?**

It is an opportunity for interested persons to consider how local communities are represented by considering:

- creating, merging, grouping, altering or abolishing parishes
- the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- the electoral arrangements for parishes (overall number of councillors, parish warding and number of councillors for those wards)

### **Parish governance in the Sevenoaks District Council area**

Parish councils, representing local communities, cover the whole of the Sevenoaks District Council area. The District Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and is keen to ensure that parish governance in the Sevenoaks District continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges ahead. Government guidance states that “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.”

### **How will the District Council publicise the review?**

The District Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices in Sevenoaks and Swanley, placing articles on the District Council’s website and in the In Shape magazine and by issuing local news releases. Specifically, the District Council will write to all parish councils and to other known community groups, to District Councillors and to the relevant County Councillors and MPs and also to Kent County Council.

### **What does the District Council expect from interested persons?**

Anyone may make representations to the District Council and those views will be put before Members of the Council at meetings of the Electoral Arrangements Committee. The Council would like to ensure that:

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- electors are able to identify clearly with the parish in which they are resident because it considers this sense of identity and community gives strength and legitimacy to the parish structure, creates a common interest in parish affairs, encourages participation in elections to the parish council, leads to representative and accountable government and generates a strong, inclusive community with a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride
- parishes reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity
- boundaries between parishes will normally reflect the “no-man’s land” between communities represented by areas of low population or pronounced physical barriers
- any proposals have been discussed and, preferably, agreed with affected parishes before a submission is made to the District Council

**Timetable for the review**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Commencement of review	Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
Deadline for submitting views	Friday, 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
Submissions considered by the District Council’s Electoral Arrangements Committee	End of March 2012
Publication of the District Council’s draft proposals	Wednesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2012
Deadline for submitting views on the District Council’s draft proposals	Friday, 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
Further submissions considered by the Electoral Arrangements Committee	Mid July 2012
Meeting of the full Council to confirm the District Council’s final proposals	July 2012
Publication of the District Council’s recommendations	August 2012
Effective date of any changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements	Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2015 (next full parish council elections)

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**How to submit your views**

In writing to	Ian Bigwood, Electoral Services Manager, Sevenoaks District Council, Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG
By e-mail to	elreg@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Parish councils will be provided with a proposals form.

Dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011

