

**COUNCIL MEETING – 25TH FEBRUARY 2021**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 (4)**

**REVIEW OF RUSHMOOR'S POLLING DISTRICTS AND  
POLLING PLACES**

Report from a meeting of the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee held on 25th January, 2021.

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

The Council has been undertaking a review of its polling districts and polling places, and the Elections Group and other Members of the Council have been involved in progressing the review process. The purpose of this Report is to recommend changes to the arrangements for polling districts and polling places.

In addition, some temporary arrangements for polling places and stations are being planned for the elections in May 2021 as set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

**The Council is recommended** to approve the proposed permanent changes to polling districts and polling places as set out in paragraph 3.2 of this Report.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 places a duty on the Council to divide the Borough into polling districts for the purposes of Parliamentary elections and to designate a polling place for each district. The arrangements are generally used for other elections and there is a requirement to keep these arrangements under review. The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that regular reviews are undertaken. It has been the Council's practice to assess its polling places and districts on an annual basis to reflect experience and local changes.
- 1.2 In carrying out the review, consideration has been given to a range of issues with specific regard to the criteria of:
- using existing polling places where possible
  - accessibility for electors
  - avoiding the use of mobile stations/temporary structures
  - ensuring the facilities meet the requirements of a range of electoral events

## **2. REVIEW PROCESS**

2.1 The stages in the review process were as follows:

- Notification of the review primarily through the Council's website and online media.
- Consultation process with stakeholders and the local community.
- Preliminary consideration by the Elections Group.
- Discussion with ward Members where issues were raised through the consultation to consider the issues and to finalise proposed polling districts and places.
- Review meeting by the Elections Group on 13th January 2021
- Consideration by the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee and the Council in February 2021.

## **3. SCHEDULE OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

3.1 Attached to this Report is a schedule setting out the polling places. The schedule largely meets the criteria established at the start of the review process and the number of permanent changes proposed is minimal. The Elections Group proposed two new polling places, and to create a new second polling district in St John's Ward in accordance with the attached plan.

3.2 The Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee supported the changes, and it is proposed that a new polling district be added to St John's Ward and that two new permanent polling places be established at:

- Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School (St Johns Ward)
- Elim Pentecostal Church Hall (North Town Ward)

3.3 The Elections Group also considered that, due to Ascension Church Hall (Rowhill Ward) not being available in 2021, a temporary arrangement should be put in place. Further to this, plans have been made to use the Field Centre at Rowhill Nature Reserve, and the Aldershot Traction Club. The intention would be to revert to using Ascension Church Hall in 2022.

3.4 Since the meeting of the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee, the government has issued a delivery plan for the May 2021 elections which discourages the use of schools as polling stations where it would result in closure and recommends the use of alternative venue. Further to this, the Elections Team is looking at whether there are possible alternative temporary arrangements for the eight schools currently used at polling stations.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 If the Council approves the recommendations, the number of polling places will increase by one. The financial implications of this are minimal and have been provided for through the budgeting process for the elections.

- 4.2 Where there are changes, there will be a small one-off cost of providing some additional publicity of the new venues to electors. There will also be some minor changes to be made to the Electoral Register and these will be picked up for March 2021.

## 5. **CONCLUSIONS**

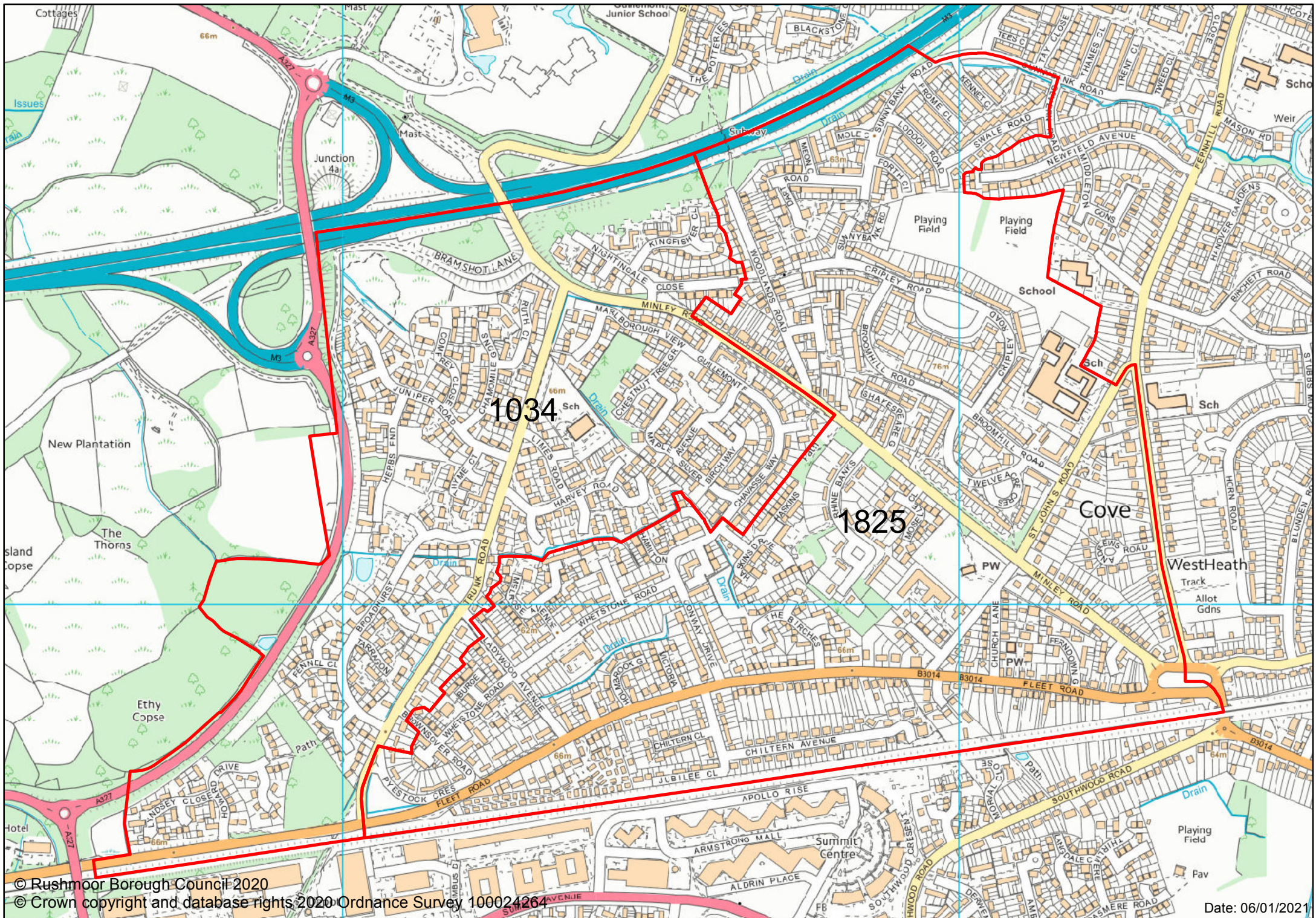
- 5.1 The Council is required to carry out a review of polling districts and polling places periodically and this review has been a useful exercise to check the suitability of the existing arrangements. In some wards there were few alternatives to the existing places and the exercise has shown that the arrangements are generally fit for purpose.
- 5.2 The Elections Group will keep the arrangements under review and consider whether any adjustments need to be made for 2022.

S.J. MASTERSON  
CHAIRMAN OF LICENSING, AUDIT AND  
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

## Polling Districts and Polling Places

NOTE: TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING PUT IN PLACE TO DELIVER COVID SAFE ELECTIONS 2021. A REVIEW OF TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS IS UNDERWAY.

| Polling District | Ward             | Polling Place                         | Consultation Comments   | Proposals (No Change/alternative)  |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| AA               | Aldershot Park   | Park Primary School                   | Parents of children attending the school and the school governing board have requested the use of another building.   | <b>No change</b> – On further investigation and following consideration with the ward councillors it has been agreed that there is currently no alternative to Park School.  |
| AB               | Aldershot Park   | Aldershot Methodist Church            | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| CA               | Cherrywood       | Church of the Good Shepherd           | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| CB               | Cherrywood       | Grange Community Junior School        | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| CSA              | Cove & Southwood | Southwood Infant School               | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| CSB              | Cove & Southwood | St Christopher's Church               | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| EA               | Empress          | North Farnborough Infant School       | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| EB               | Empress          | Our Lady & St. Dominic Church Hall    | Thinking of the increase in properties around Farnborough Airport consideration should be given to having an additional polling place at the Council Offices. | <b>No change</b> – After discussions with the ward councillors this will not progress forward at the current time  |
| FA               | Fernhill         | Guillemont Junior School              | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| FB               | Fernhill         | Fernhill Primary School               | Request from the school to find an alternative venue for polling day.   | <b>No change</b> – Consultation undertaken with the ward councillors. The only suitable alternative was All Saints Church Hall but this is unable to accommodate elections on the scheduled days   |
| KA               | Knellwood        | Farnborough Bowling Club              | Request to find an alternative venue as it was considered unsuitable and near another polling station in the ward   | <b>No change</b> – Following consultation with the ward councillors, it was agreed that the existing arrangements are most suitable.   |
| KB               | Knellwood        | St Peters Parish Centre               | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| KC               | Knellwood        | Mobile - King George V Playing Fields | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| MA               | Manor Park       | St Josephs R.C. Primary School        | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| MB               | Manor Park       | 2nd Aldershot Scout Group             | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| NA               | North Town       | Alderwood Junior School               | Parents of children attending the school have requested using another building.   | <b>Change</b> – Elim Pentecostal Church on Holly Road was a suggested alternative and on further investigation and consultation with the ward councillors this venue is considered well suited as a venue for elections. Parking will be reviewed after the elections. |
| NB               | North Town       | North Town Community Base             | None  | <b>No change</b> – This polling place will need to be reviewed at some stage when the next phase of the North Town redevelopment is underway   |
| RA               | Rowhill          | Ascension Church Hall                 | None  | <b>No change.</b> However, the Hall is not available for 2021 so a temporary solution is being put in place  |
| RB               | Rowhill          | 4th Aldershot Scout Hq                | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| SJA              | St Johns         | St John's Church Hall                 | Request from ward councillors to split the ward into two polling districts and use Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School at the other location.            | <b>Change</b> - Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School has agreed to the use the building for elections and this will have no impact on the school as it is separate. St Johns will be divided into two polling districts in accordance with the attached plan.      |
| SMA              | St Marks         | Our Lady Help of Christians           | Request from ward councillor to consider allocating an additional polling place as the ward is widely spread.   | <b>No change</b> – At present there is no other well situated buildings to accommodate those on the Queens Gate development or enough electors registered in the military accommodation to justify a polling place there. The arrangements will be kept under review   |
| WA               | Wellington       | Princes Hall                          | Thinking of the increase in properties on the Wellesley development consideration to be given into an additional venue.                                       | <b>No change</b> – At present there is no suitable venue for use as a second polling place. The arrangements will be monitored in coming years as more properties are built.   |
| WHA              | Westheath        | Blunden Hall                          | None  | <b>No change</b>   |
| WHB              | Westheath        | Manor Infant School                   | None  | <b>No change</b>   |



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