

# **REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES IN THE MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT**

## **1. Background to the Review**

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The arrangements made for Parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.

The Mole Valley Parliamentary constituency consists of the Mole Valley District, except for the Ashted wards (which form part of the Epsom & Ewell Parliamentary constituency), and five wards located in the east of the Borough of Guildford. Mole Valley District Council conducts reviews on the polling districts/places within the Mole Valley District boundaries only. The other polling districts/places which make up the rest of the Mole Valley Parliamentary constituency are reviewed by Guildford Borough Council.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a duty on all local authorities to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every four years. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended this duty, requiring all local authorities to carry out and complete a compulsory review between 1 October 2013 and 31 January 2015, and subsequent compulsory reviews every five years thereafter. The existing Mole Valley District Council ward boundaries, and the Parliamentary constituency boundaries, are not part of this review, although they will be reviewed periodically in the future by the relevant Boundary Committee or Commission.

## **2. Definitions**

“Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.

“Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.

The polling place should in normal circumstances be situated within the polling district for which it is designated, but in some circumstances, for example where no suitable polling place can be found, the polling place may be designated outside the polling district.

“Polling stations” are the number of issuing desks in the building that is the designated polling place, which generally range from one to three. The Returning Officer determines the number of polling stations depending on the electorate at a particular election. The number of electors allocated to a particular polling station should not exceed 2,500.

### 3. The Review Process

The council publishes notice of holding the review, and consults the Returning Officer for each Parliamentary constituency in the council's area, namely for the Mole Valley constituency and the Epsom & Ewell Constituency. The council then invites comments on the proposals. The consultation paper will be published on the council's website, and will also be sent to councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties, parish councils and any other interested groups or persons, including those who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.

### 4. The Review Timetable

The timetable for the review is set out below:

Publication of notice of review	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Publication of consultation document including Returning Officer's comments	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Closing date for representations	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Final proposal published via Agenda papers and website	Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Council meeting – approval of polling districts and polling places	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2019

### 5. The Proposals

The Electoral Commission recognises that there may be little choice available in the location of polling places, but every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access to all electors. The choice of a polling place will often be a balance between the quality of a building (access, facilities etc) and the proximity of the building to electors.

The council appreciates the co-operation of polling places in providing their building for the day so that electors have a convenient place to vote. The intention is not to make changes for change's sake. The proposals seek to address any issues which have arisen during recent elections and are informed by feedback from polling station staff and inspectors.

The principles underlying the council's approach to polling districts and polling places are:

- a) To retain the current network of polling places and polling districts as far as possible, to minimise disruption to voters.
- b) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate.

- c) To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
- d) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- e) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

This document sets out details of current polling district and polling places for each of the wards in Mole Valley, and details of issues and any proposed changes.

## **6. Making comments**

Any elector registered in Mole Valley may make representations on the existing and proposed arrangements for polling districts and polling places. We would also welcome comments and suggestions from any group or person who has particular expertise in relation to access for persons who have different forms of disability.

Where someone suggests a change of polling place, we would encourage them to give the reasons for this, and to suggest alternative polling places to allow further and wider consultation.

Any representations must be received by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

All representations should be addressed to:

Democratic & Electoral Services  
Mole Valley District Council  
Pippbrook  
Dorking  
RH4 1SJ

or emailed to: [pollingstationreview@molevalley.gov.uk](mailto:pollingstationreview@molevalley.gov.uk)

At the end of the review, details of representations received will be published on the MVDC website and in the final report to be considered by on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Comments from individuals will be anonymised, while comments made on behalf of a political party, organisation, parish council or local member will be stated as such.

Your details will be processed in accordance with MVDC's [privacy policy](#). Details of the representation will be retained for 2 years and then securely destroyed.

## **7. Completion of the Review**

A report will be submitted to the meeting of the Council on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019, where councillors will consider the proposals and

representations received before reaching their decisions on the most appropriate polling districts and polling places.

## **8. Role of the Electoral Commission**

Although the Electoral Commission has no role in the review process itself, it can consider comments if people do not think that the review has met the reasonable requirements of electors or taken sufficient account of the needs of disabled electors.

The following people can make representations to the Electoral Commission:

- Any parish council within the constituency
- 30 or more registered electors
- any person who made comments during the review
- any non-electors who the Commission feels has sufficient interest in the accessibility of disabled persons

The Electoral Commission would consider the representations and may direct the council to alter polling arrangements, or make the alterations itself if the council fails to do so within two months.