

The 2024 Polling Place review has taken place at the latest possible point following an incredibly busy year for the Elections Team. The conclusion of the Electoral Review carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England resulted in an “all out” election in May 2024. This poll saw all 32 council seats up for election across 16 wards, all of which had some changes to boundaries, meaning that a sizeable proportion of voters were voting in newly named wards or within newly defined polling districts.

Before the local elections were administratively concluded, the then Prime Minister called a snap Parliamentary General Election for 4 July 2024. This election was to be run on newly defined constituency boundaries following a review by the Boundary Commission for England. This review resulted in the Borough of Fareham being served by 3 MPs (Fareham and Waterlooville, Gosport and Hamble Valley) with Fareham running the polls for 2 constituencies.

It should not be underestimated how difficult it can be to secure venues for polling stations at short notice, especially when the national electoral event is held with diminished timeframes for planning and in quick succession following existing planned local and national elections. This is a difficult task even when the Council has an approved scheme for polling places.

In keeping with the Council’s commitment to focussing on customer needs, it is imperative that we continue to avoid the closure of schools as a consequence of being used as polling stations, particularly as we have demonstrated that where possible, alternatives have been found and be used successfully.

It should be recognised that the use of joint polling places which contain multiple polling stations provides additional resilience for staffing in terms of mutual support and cover for busy periods. It is also of benefit to campaigning parties who have reduced locations to cover.

In summary, I am satisfied that the recently reviewed polling places, as listed in the draft scheme are suitable.