

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 2014 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman), P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman), J. M. Boswell, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, L. C. R. Mallett, R. J. Shannon and C. J. Tidmarsh

Observers: Councillor L. J. Turner

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. L. Tovey, Ms. A. Scarce and Mrs. S. Mould

1/14 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor J. M. L. A. Griffiths be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

2/14 **ELECTION A VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor P. Lammas be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

3/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K. A. Grant-Pearce.

4/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

5/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 11th September 2012 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/14 **POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2014**

The Committee were asked to consider a report on the Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2014. Members were informed that the review followed the earlier Ward Boundary review, by the Boundary Commission for England of the Council's electoral arrangements, which produced a new ward map for the District.

During the discussions the Review Project Officer brought to the attention of Members two late submissions, which Officer had felt Members should be made aware of; these were in respect of concerns raised by both the Wythall Residents Association and Wythall Parish Council and the use of the Woodrush Centre. It was highlighted that these concerns had been raised at stages 1 and 2 of the process, however in light of the late submissions Officers had revisited the use of this Centre once again and contacted Woodrush High School accordingly. Officers were happy with the response received from Woodrush High School and the use of the Woodrush Centre as a Polling Station.

Officers responded to the following areas raised by Members during the discussion:

- The number of residents affected by the changes.
- The distance that those residents would have to travel.
- The cost of including an additional polling station.

Officers reminded Members that the information provided in the report had been agreed by a cross party working group who had discussed and agreed a number of measures which had been applied when looking at the location of all polling stations. The number of polling stations had not changed significantly and a review of the various premises used as polling station was carried out regularly.

Concerns were raised about the significant amount of change which was taking place at a time when there was parish, local and a general elections being carried out and whether this could have an impact on the overall turn out of electors. Officers assured Members that this had been taken into account and that every effort would be made to ensure that residents were aware of all the changes. A publicity campaign, with the support of the Communications Team, would commence in early January 2015 using various methods of communications, including for example leaflets, advertising in local papers, Parish and Ward Councillors and campaign groups. This would continue in the lead up to the election to ensure that wherever possible problems would be addressed. It was appreciated that people found change difficult in some circumstances and support would be provided wherever necessary.

Councillor L. C. R. Mallett informed Members that he had been a part of the cross party working group and assured them that the contents of the report now brought before the Committee had been discussed in detail and all submissions and options had been considered. He also took the opportunity to thank the Electoral Services team for their support and dedication, with a very difficult task, in order to reach the current position.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the entry 2230 / Alvechurch South, “St Lawrence” be amended to “St Laurence” in Appendices 1 and 2;
- (b) that the final proposals in respect of Polling District Boundaries, as contained in Appendix 1 to this report entitled “Schedule of Electoral Areas” are approved;
- (c) that the final proposals in respect of Polling Places as set out in the final column of Appendix 2 of the report headed “Full Description” are approved; and
- (d) that the decision of the Committee in respect of (b) and (c) as detailed above take effect from the date of publication of the revised Register of Electors on 1st December 2014.

The meeting closed at 6.32 p.m.

Chairman