



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors H. D. N. Rone-Clarke (Chairman), J. Robinson (Vice-Chairman), S. R. Colella, E. M. S. Gray, C.A. Hotham, H. J. Jones and R. Lambert

AGENDA

- 1. To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
- 3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 2nd February 2021, 8th July 2021 and 24th July 2023 (Pages 5 - 16)**
- 4. Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023 (Pages 17 - 24)**
- 5. To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**

Sue Hanley
Chief Executive (Interim)

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

12th September 2023

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

2ND FEBRUARY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, S. G. Hession, J. E. King and M. Middleton

Officers: Mr D. Whitney, Ms M. Bassett and Ms. A. Scarce

10/2020

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor L Mallett be appointed Chairman for the purpose of this meeting.

11/2020

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Glass and R Hunter, with Councillors A Beaumont and J King attending as substitutes respectively.

12/2020

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

13/2020

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 29th September 2020 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 29th September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

14/2020

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR PROPOSED NEW PARISH WITHIN THE CURRENT STOKE PARISH AREA

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report and in so doing highlighted the following:

- The results of the survey and questionnaire which went out to all households in the Stoke parish area, consultation was for 14 October, originally up to 14th December, but the Committee had agreed to extend this to 28th December 2020.

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- 265 paper forms had been returned and 53 had been made via the website, that was a 15% return from households. There was also a submission from the Parish Council and a separate written response from a resident of the parish.
- The main question was “did residents want a new parish to be created from the Stoke Heath ward”. 116 residents were for the creation of a new parish and 197 against. In the Stoke Heath ward 60 were for and 61 were against.
- The Committee needed to consider whether there was due regard for community cohesion between the areas within the parish. The question was asked did the parish create a feeling of local community for and including electors in Stoke Heath. 154 thought it did create a feeling of community and 138 said there was not. In looking just at Stoke Heath 44 said there was and 68 said there was not.
- The question was then asked to the reasons why there was or was not that feeling of community cohesion (as detailed in appendices 1 and 2 of the report). The main areas highlighted appeared to be the central use of the recreation ground, the parish newsletter and events held in the parish. A number felt that the parish council concentrated on Stoke Prior and the newsletter put Stoke Prior first and in some cases, Stoke Heath residents felt ignored and that it was two areas of different environments.
- The third question was would you be interested in standing as a parish council. 277 had said no and 20 had responded yes.
- The residents were then asked if the changes were to happen, if they had any suggestions as to any different names for the parishes. The current Ward names were the most supported with 77% of the respondents said Stoke Prior and Stoke Heath. There were however a number of other suggestions including Stoke Works, Charford South and Stoke and Avoncroft and Stoke Heath.
- Consultees were finally asked to give any other comments, and these were detailed in appendix 3 to the report. There were a number of different remarks, but three in particular came up a number of times, concerns about the cost of council tax for the new parishes to be created, the area Polling District RHA (Stoke Heath ward) did not contain the whole of Stoke Heath and it was suggested that it should include Polling District AVB as well as RHA, and that the number of Councillors representing each ward should be reviewed.
- The response from the Parish Council was attached at appendix 4 and they were in support of the status quo and the response from the resident at appendix 5, was for the creation of another parish and addressed a number of areas including community identity.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that the Committee had three options in respect of the send stage of the consultation, which were

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detailed within the report. That consultation would begin of 15th February and continue until 17th May 2021.

The Chairman asked whether a response had been received from either of the District Councillors in relation to the consultation, it was confirmed that they had not responded. It was questioned whether it was possible to ask them to comment and it was noted that they would automatically be consulted in the second consultation and the Chairman asked for it to be noted in the minutes that it would be helpful for them to respond to the second consultation.

Following presentation of the report, Members raised a number of points and asked a variety of questions, including:

- Whether there was a rule for the number of parish councillors needed – it was confirmed that this was a minimum of 5 seats on a parish council. It was also noted that there were a number of Members on this Committee who were or had been parish councillors.
- What the drivers had actually been for the suggested split when the petition had been put forward. It was confirmed that the petition had simply said the undersigned requested that the Council consider making the area known as Stoke Heath Ward a civil parish, independent of Stoke Parish Council. A number of areas had also been included in the covering letter, for example that people felt a disproportionate amount of the precept was being spent on Stoke Prior Ward and it would be fairer if they were able to set their own budget.
- It was commented that it would have been useful to have a map which showed the exact Wards that would be affected by the suggested changes. It was highlighted that the area had changed in recent years and now was very much rural and village type environment to one side and the other was more urban and almost a suburb of Bromsgrove itself, which was perhaps the driver for the new parish to be created.
- It was noted that details of the number of residents in each ward was included within the report and the Electoral Services Manager provided the breakdown by polling district and the number of parish councillors. The new proposed parish would cover 1,123 electors.
- Members discussed the shared facilities which appear to sit on the border.
- It was highlighted that there were also similar situations in other parishes and an example was given.
- It was questioned whether there needed to be a second consultation and it was confirmed that this was the case.
- The question was asked that, should the new parish be created what its roll would be and what facilities would it need to maintain. It was discussed that if the original parish covered the majority of amenities, then there was the possibility that it would have to “back fill” the loss of the precept from those that would be moved

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to the new parish area, with those residents still in fact using the amenities.

- How the parish council would be financed, and the concerns raised in respect of any increase was discussed and it was confirmed that the precept was set by the parish itself and therefore it could drop, remain the same or increase.
- Whether the route to becoming an unparished area was first to become a parished area. This was understood to be the case and an example of this happening in another area was briefly discussed.
- The Chairman clarified that the Committee's roll was to set the question(s) that would form the basis of the second consultation.
- Members questioned what the second consultation would involve if the Committee were to suggest that the situation remained in its current position. It was clarified that this would simply be did residents think that Stoke Parish Council should remain covering its current area with a simple yes or no response.
- From the evidence provided Members did not believe that there was clear evidence to support any change. It was therefore agreed that going into the second consultation that would be the suggestion from the Committee.
- It was confirmed that the balance of Parish Councillors was based on the area of population representing those households.

The Electoral Services Manager then went on to explain that the Committee needed to consider how the draft recommendation would be carried out. The options were a letter as in the first round of consultations, with access to the website or whether the Committee wanted to suggest an alternative format. Members suggested that any further consultation should be carried out at a minimal cost to the Council as a substantial consultation had already taken place involving a large number of residents. It was suggested that the opening up of the website could be the main format, with advertising throughout the parish, but not to send out individual letters to all residents. Following discussion, it was agreed that opening up the website with the appropriate advertising was the most cost effective option available. It was confirmed that a press release could also be made and that the Parish Council would be on the consultation list as there was a number of statutory consultees who would receive a letter. It was noted that within the agenda pack a detailed letter had already been received from the Parish Council. It was suggested that Officers draw up a document which would be sent to Members outside of the meeting before it was issued.

Members took the opportunity to thank Officers for the detailed piece of work which they had carried out and the time taken to prepare it, particularly in these difficult times. The Chairman also thanked all the residents who had taken the time to respond to the consultation.

RESOLVED that

- a) **the results of the consultation undertaken as a result of a valid petition regarding a parish separate from Stoke Parish Council consisting of polling district RHA be noted;**
- b) **that no change be undertaken; and**
- c) **that the consultation be carried out through advertising and press release, with the proposed wording shared with the Committee for comment before publication.**

15/2020

POLLING STATION CHANGES - VERBAL UPDATE

The Electoral Services Manager confirmed that at the current time it was still proposed that elections would take place in May 2021, this would be combined Worcestershire County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in Bromsgrove. His team had been doing work around contacting all Polling Station to ensure that they were Covid Secure. Members were reminded that this was a verbal update, as outside the mandatory Polling Places review, which was carried out in 2019, delegated authority was given to the Returning Officer in consultation with the Ward Member and the Portfolio Holder to make decision on any changes to polling places.

The Electoral Services Manager provided updates on the following Polling Stations, where different options were being considered, due to the nature of the station:

- **Rubery Sports and Social Club – Polling District RNA**
The function room at the rear was unavailable, due to building works. It was hoped that this would be available for future elections, but for May 2021 the potential to move back to Holywell School or perhaps use Rubery Community Leisure Centre. This would be visited on 5th February 2021 to see whether it was suitable.
- **Lickey End First School**
It was acknowledged that both this Committee and the Council to try and move away from the use of school wherever possible. This school had asked if it could not be used and as an alternative Lickey End Social Club had been contacted and they were happy to offer their services. It had better parking access and access for social distancing.
- **Members were reminded that, if elections had gone ahead in 2020, the School at Clent would have been used. However, Clent Parish Hall Committee were now happy for the Hall to be used again.**
- **Millfield Social Club**
The Social Club had raised concerns about Covid access and officers would be visiting the site on 3rd February to investigate further.

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- Court Leet – this was currently closed, and Officers were having difficulties in contacting anyone to discuss its use.

The Electoral Services Manager confirmed that once the new venues had been assessed and deemed suitable the relevant Ward Members would be consulted.

The Chairman raised a point in respect of the area which fed into Court Leet, the Rock Hill area, for which he was County Councillor. It was felt that the Court Leet was a compromise solution and the use of a portable unit at another site might be more appropriate. It was suggested that the turnout at the polling station was traditionally quite low due to the distance outside of the boundary that some of the electorate would need to travel. Officers were asked to consider whether there was any land suitable to put a portable unit on in the estate in question. A number of areas were suggested, and the Electoral Services Manager agreed to investigate this matter further.

RESOLVED that the verbal update in respect of the Polling Station changes be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.54 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

8TH JULY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. J. Jones (Chairman), S. P. Douglas, J. E. King,
A. D. Kriss and M. Thompson

Officers: Mr D. Whitney, Mrs J. Bayley-Hill and Ms M. Bassett

1/21

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of any serving Members of the Committee, Members agreed to postpone the appointment of a Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee for 2021/22 to the following meeting of the Committee.

A nomination was received for Councillor H. Jones to serve as Chairman for the meeting. The nomination was proposed by Councillor M. Thompson and seconded by Councillor A. Beaumont.

RESOLVED that

- (a) A decision on the appointment of the Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year be postponed for consideration at the following meeting of the Committee; and
- (b) Councillor H. Jones be appointed as Chairman at this meeting of the Committee.

2/21

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

In the absence of any serving Members of the Committee, Members agreed to postpone the appointment of a Vice Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee for 2021/22 to the following meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that a decision be taken on the appointment of the Vice Chairman of the Electoral Matters Committee for 2021/22 at the following meeting of the Committee.

3/21

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Colella, R. Deeming, M. Glass, S. Hession, R. Hunter, M. Middleton and H. Rone-Clarke.

It was confirmed that Councillors A. Beaumont, S. Douglas, H. Jones, M. Thompson, J. King and A. Kriss were attending as Councillors Hession,

Colella, Deeming, Glass, Hunter and Middleton's substitutes respectively.

4/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2021**

In the absence of the members of the Electoral Matters Committee it was agreed that a vote on the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee would be postponed for consideration at the following meeting.

RESOLVED that a decision be taken on the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 2nd February 2021 at the next meeting of the Committee.

6/21 **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR PROPOSED PARISH WITHIN THE CURRENT STOKE PARISH AREA**

The Electoral Services Manager presented a report detailing the background to the Community Governance Review for the proposed Parish within the current Stoke Parish area.

The Committee was informed that a petition had been received in 2020 which proposed that a separate Parish Council should be established for Stoke Heath, consisting of polling district RHA. This proposal had been subject to consultation and a number of responses had been received from local stakeholders. These responses had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Committee, held in February 2021, when Members had decided not to make any changes. The second round of consultation had now been completed. Only one response had been received during this round of consultation, from the existing Parish Council, which had indicated that its position remained unchanged, though the points that had been raised during the first round of consultation would be taken on board.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor A. Beaumont and seconded by Councillor A. Kriss.

RESOLVED that, in respect of the review of a parish separate from Stoke Parish Council consisting of polling district RHA, no change be undertaken.

The meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

24TH JULY 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. D. N. Rone-Clarke (Chairman), J. Robinson (Vice-Chairman), D. J. A. Forsythe, K.J. May, S. R. Peters and D. G. Stewart

Officers: Mr D. Whitney and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

1/23 **ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2023/24 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED that

Councillor H Rone-Clark be elected Chairman of the Committee for 2023/24 municipal year.

2/23 **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2023/24 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED that

Councillor J Robinson be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal year.

3/23 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Colella, E Gray, C Hotham, H Jones and R Lambert.

The following Councillors attended as substitutes: D Forsythe for R Lambert, K May for H Jones, S Peters for C Hotham and D Stewart for E Gray.

4/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5/23 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH JULY 2021**

As Councillors who had been present at the previous meeting were not at this meeting of the Committee, it was agreed to defer consideration of the accuracy of the minutes until the next meeting. Officers confirmed that a meeting of the Committee was likely to be required in the autumn.

RESOLVED that a decision be taken on the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 8th July 2021 at the next meeting of the Committee.

6/23

STATUTORY POLLING DISTRICT PLACES REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Electoral Services Manager which set out key stages and a proposed timetable for a formal statutory review of the Polling Districts and Polling Places. The statutory review must be completed before the end of January 2025, but it was proposed that it should be complete before the end of March 2024 to tie in with the forthcoming Westminster Parliamentary Election, due to be held before the end of January 2025.

During discussion of the report, Councillor J Robinson asked for details of changes made to the polling districts in the previous review in 2019. The Electoral Services Manager undertook to provide details to him outside the meeting.

In response to a question about a polling district boundary which ran through a new housing development, the Electoral Services Manager clarified that it was likely to be a District ward boundary which was affected. This would be looked at during the planned ward boundary review which the Local Government Boundary Commission for England was due to carry out, starting in September 2023.

A councillor queried the impact of changes in the number of electors on polling districts. The Electoral Services Manager explained that if there were more than 2,250 electors in a polling district, then more than one polling station would be provided at each election. This was to meet the Electoral Commission's guidance that there should not be more than 2,250 electors allocated to a single polling station. In response to a further question, he reported that comments and queries about specific polling stations used for the District Council elections in May 2023 would be included as part of the proposed Polling Districts and Places review.

The Chairman asked that a meeting of the Committee was arranged in time for members to review the plans for consultation about the review, in particular in case they could propose community groups and interested parties who could be approached for their input during the consultation phase. This was supported and it was agreed that the proposed timetable included with the report would be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED that

- a) The timetable for the review in appendix 2 to the report be agreed, subject to the inclusion of a date for a meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee to agree the plan for communications; and

b) The review formally commences on 2 October 2023.

7/23

POSSIBLE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - BENTLEY PAUNCEFOOT PARISH (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Electoral Services Manager reported that earlier this year, Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council had approached the District Council asking how it could remain a rural parish. The Parish was exploring how it could cede the area of land where housing development was taking place, at Foxlydiate. Officers had explained that this could only be considered as part of a Community Governance Review. Further consideration had been deferred until after the elections in May. If the Parish Council still wished to explore change, the Electoral Services Manager suggested that the Chairman of the Committee could meet with them to discuss options.

Members of the Committee queried the timing of any potential review and who would be involved. The Electoral Services Manager reported that if a petition was submitted to the District Council by the Parish Council, the Parish Council would be required to provide maps and reasons for its request. The Committee would be obliged to consider this and decide whether or not to proceed.

A member suggested that the implications of changes to governance might impact on other aspects of Parish Council activity such as involvement in planning applications and certain funding arrangements. The Committee agreed that at this stage officers would write to the Parish Council asking it to confirm whether it wished to continue consideration of a potential community governance review. They would also offer to set up an informal discussion with the Chairman and other members of the Committee and the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council so that process, requirements and potential implications of a review could be explored and understood.

RESOLVED that Officers write to Bentley Pauncefoot Parish Council seeking confirmation that it wishes to explore pursuit of a Community Governance Review and offering an informal meeting to discuss this with the Chairman and other members of the Committee and the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council.

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.

Chairman

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ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE 2023

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Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillors May, Leader, and Hotham, Cabinet Member for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Claire Felton
Report Author	Job Title: Electoral Services Manager, Darren Whitney Contact email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881650	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		Will be part of consultation
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		N/A
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 that the communications plan for the review in appendix 1 be agreed.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on the 24 July 2023 it was agreed that the statutory review would formally commence on 2 October 2023.

2.3 The statutory review covers, Polling Districts (a geographical area, which tend not to cross Ward or Parish Boundaries), Polling Place (a building or area where Polling Stations are located) and Polling Stations (the room or area where polling takes place, the decision on location of the polling station is decided by the (Acting) Returning Officer).

2.4 The review consists of four stages:

- Stage 1 – Notification
- Stage 2 – Consultation
- Stage 3 – Concluding the Review
- Stage 4 – Publication

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- 2.5 The (Acting) Returning Officer must make a submission regarding current and any proposed polling stations.
- 2.6 The Committee had requested a communications plan to be considered before the review commences, this is attached in appendix 1.
- 2.7 There will be a dedicated webpage on the Council's website which will have all the information on current polling districts, places and stations. The webpage will also inform those interested how to respond in terms of suggesting changes to polling districts, places or stations.

Interested parties including members of the public will be able to:

- Write directly to the Electoral Services Manager.
- Download and email the form on the webpage.
- Complete the electronic form on the webpage.

Officers will write to interested parties and stakeholders including All Ward Councillors, the MP, County Councillors, Parishes and local interest groups including organisations that deal with different forms of disability where voting in person could pose a difficulty.

- 2.8 Officers will be contacting individuals or organisations that have commented on their own polling station and invite them to make representations.
- 2.9 Information regarding the review will also be sent to Parish Clerks to post on their websites/parish notice boards.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Subject to the Committee's final decisions, there may be some minor financial implications for the Council which arise directly from this review, but which can be contained within existing budgets.
- 3.2 Depending on the outcome of the review there may be additional costs or savings regarding polling stations that are to be used in future elections.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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- 4.1 The Review will be undertaken as required under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and Electoral Administration Act 2013, and in accordance with relevant Electoral Commission Guidance.
- 4.2 a) Authority to set Polling District boundaries and to designate polling places rests with the Council (Statutory elements of the Council's Constitution under the Local Government Act 2000). Bromsgrove District Council has delegated full relevant powers to this Electoral Matters Committee.
- b) Decisions about the situation of Polling Stations within designated Polling Places are for the (Acting) Returning Officer. Arrangements must comply with relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Acts and Regulations, the Equality Act 2010 and the Elections Act 2022.
- 4.3 "Relevant authorities" (such as Bromsgrove District Council) must
- "a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the Constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances"; and
- "b) seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled and, when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons. If it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal, then every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access for all electors."
- 4.4 The Elections Act 2022 has placed new considerations for Local Authorities in regard to polling places. Key considerations are accessibility and checking voter's ID to ensure polling stations have suitable space to allow polling station staff to check documents and provide a privacy screen or separate area for confidential conversations.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 This report deals with statutory functions but relates to the strategic purpose of an effective and sustainable council.

Climate Change Implications

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- 5.2 It is preferable that choice of polling place location can help minimise unnecessary additional journeys by motorised vehicles.
- 5.3 Emissions and carbon footprint should be reduced as far as possible.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Accessibility for members of minority or disadvantaged groups is a key issue in the selection of suitable Polling Stations. The (Acting) Returning Officer will have a general responsibility to provide equipment to support people with a range of disabilities in the polling station.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 The review will take up a large amount of Officer in time in dealing with consultation, producing statistics, maps and reporting back to this Committee.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Any changes agreed must be likely to be sustainable for a reasonable number of years, as frequent changes of Polling Station are not helpful for electors and undermine their knowledge of, and confidence in, electoral systems.
- 7.2 Choice of Polling Place / Polling Station should not give rise to significant grounds of complaint which might put election results at risk of challenge.
- 7.3 The (Acting) Returning Officer must provide adequate levels and standards of staffing to secure proper polling arrangements. The Electoral Commission has changed it's guidance in that no more than 2,250 electors should be allocated to a single polling station with at least 1 Presiding Officer and 3 Poll Clerks.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Communications Plan

Local Government Boundary Commission for England Guidance

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Relevant statutory provisions

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Hotham	9 September
Head of Service		Sent 8 September
Financial Services		Sent 8 September
Legal Services		Sent 8 September

Agenda Item 4

Comms plan for Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2023 BDC

Objectives

- Inform people that the consultation is running and why
- Explain and promote the wider principles
- Encourage engagement and responses.

Key messages

- Councils must conduct 5-yearly reviews of all their polling districts and polling places
- That consultation for the review at BDC is now set for Oct 2 – Nov 13
- You can comment on issues such as convenience of current polling places/polling stations, general and/or disability accessibility, and ideas for alternative locations.
- Comments received will be published and inform the work of the council.

Methods and channels

- Web page with full info (under Elections and signposted from www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/consultations)
- Email to members
- Letter/email to other stakeholders (including county members, parishes and local interest groups)
- Press release to local media
- BDC social media content
- Internal corporate comms at the council.

Milestone dates

- Consultation starts, Monday Oct 2
- Consultation ends, Monday Nov 13
- To Electoral Matters Committee, Nov/Dec
- To Full Council / publication of conclusions, Dec/Jan

Planner

Audience	Objective	Indirect comms	Direct comms	Press and social	Actions/dates/dept
Public	Notify of consultation Explain purpose Provide key info like dates and	Web page	NA	Press release Social posts throughout	Web page up by Sep 22, Elections Press, 25 Sep, Comms

Agenda Item 4

	how to respond				Social, 25 Sep, 16 Oct, 6 Nov, Comms
Members	Raise awareness Help answer questions from constituents	Web page	Email	NA	Email, by Sep 22, Elections
Other stakeholders	Notify of consultation Explain purpose Provide key info like dates and how to respond	Web page	Letter/email	NA	Write, by Sep 22, Elections
Staff (internal)	Promote awareness of review Help answer questions into customer services	Web page	Corporate comms channels	NA	Internal, Sep 25, Comms