

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

16 February 2017

Polling Place Alterations 2017

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Wards Affected	Sidemoor, Slideslow, Norton
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Non-Key Decision	(Electoral Matters Committee has full devolved powers)

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The report sets out where changes need to be made to polling places in advance of the 4 May Elections 2017. These are temporary changes for County Council Elections.
- 1.2 The recommendations below set out Officers' proposals arising from investigations and Members comments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **that the electors from Polling Districts SMB, SSB, NTD and NTB be moved to a different polling place for stand alone County Council Elections;**
- 2.2 **that the temporary polling place for electors in Polling District SMB be Girl Guide Hut, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove;**
- 2.3 **that the temporary polling place for electors in Polling District SSB be All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove;**
- 2.4 **that the temporary polling place for electors in Polling Districts NTD and NTB be The Wheel, St Catherine's Church, St Catherine's Road, Blackwell;**
- 2.4 **that the decisions of the Committee take effect immediately.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are some minor financial implications for the Council which arise from this report but will be contained within existing budgets.

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Legal Implications

3.2 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 and the Equality Act 2010.

Service / Operational Implications

3.3 In some areas within the Bromsgrove District the County Divisions are not co-terminus with District Boundaries. Some of areas can be dealt with by the (Acting) Returning Officer but there are some issues that require a Committee Decision.

3.4 The effect of non co-terminus boundaries means that electors from two different County Divisions would be going to the same polling station.

The polling districts where there are potential problems with polling places are:

a) SMB – Parkside, Sidemoor Ward; 7 Electors affected

b) SSB – Slideslow North, Slideslow Ward, 8 Electors affected

c) NTD – Norton East, NTB – Crows Mill; Norton Ward, 8 Electors affected

3.5 There are three options to able resolve this, two of which the (Acting) Returning Officer can make the decision the third requires the Committee to decide:

Option 1: The Presiding Officer has two ballot boxes one for each Division. The Presiding Officer has to be very careful a ballot paper from one Division does not go into the wrong box. If this happens it could cause delays at the count.

Option 2: There are two stations in the Polling Place with staff at each station. This does not make economic sense as staff costs would be hundreds of pounds for a maximum of 8 voters.

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Option 3: That electors are moved to a different polling place where the same Division is voting. This change would be for the County elections only and would not take effect if there was a by-election on the same day.

- 3.6 Officers consider that Option 3 is the preferred option and if agreed the following proposals should be considered.
- 3.7 Polling District SMB: it is proposed to move the 7 electors from New Song Polling Station to the Girl Guide Hut. This is in walking distance for the electors.
- 3.8 Polling District SSB: It is proposed to move the 8 electors from Finstall First School polling station to All Saints Church Polling Station. In essence travel by car is required to get to either of the polling stations. It should be noted that 3 of the electors are already Postal Voters.
- 3.9 Polling Districts NTD and NTB: It is proposed to move 8 electors from Lickey End First School Polling Station to The Wheel at St Catherine's Church Polling Station. There would be approximately be an extra 0.4 mile to travel. It should be noted 4 of the electors are already postal voters.
- 3.10 Members have been consulted and the Portfolio Holder is satisfied with option 3 and the Ward Member for Slideslow is content for the changes in thier ward to be made.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 The Council's policies directly cross-relate, particularly in relation to Access issues. Accessibility for members of minority or disadvantaged groups is a key issue in the selection of suitable Polling Stations.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Risks are included in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.9 above.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Electoral Commission Guidance.

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7. KEY

Bromsgrove Returning Officer, Mr Kevin Dicks, is designated (Acting) Returning Officer for Parliamentary Elections.

This is because formally the Returning Officer for a County Constituency such as Bromsgrove is the High Sheriff for that County, which is a purely honorific title/role.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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