

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**16 February 2017**

---

## **Polling Place Delegation**

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

### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The report sets out change of delegation regarding polling places outside of the compulsory review period. This would allow decisions to be made where changes to polling places are required quickly.
- 1.2 The recommendations below set out Officers' proposals arising from investigation.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **that the (Acting) Returning Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Ward Members be allowed to alter polling places outside compulsory review periods;**
- 2.2 **that the decision of the Committee take effect immediately.**

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are some minor financial reductions for the Council in not holding extra Electoral Matters Committees.

#### **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.

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**16 February 2017**

---

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 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced timing of compulsory reviews of polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October 2018.
- 3.4 Outside of this period the Electoral Matters Committee has full delegation to deal with reviews. A review of a polling district can be significant but the change of a polling place is often quite simplistic but requires rapid action ie a polling place becomes unavailable due to a change of ownership, or a fire at the current polling place.
- 3.5 Officers have looked at how other Local Authorities deal with changes to polling places outside of the compulsory review period. Many Local Authorities (including most of Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire) delegate Authority. The most popular form of delegation is to the (Acting) Returning Officer in consultation with Ward Members. Although some Authorities delegate just to the (Acting) Returning Officer.
- 3.6 After looking at different models, Officers consider to expedite the polling place review process so there is the least disruption to the electorate it is recommended that outside of the compulsory review process the (Acting) Returning Officer be able to alter polling places in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and affected Ward Members.

#### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.7 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 Changes to polling places, when necessary, should be completed as soon as possible especially during the election timetable.

#### **5. APPENDICES**

None

# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**16 February 2017**

---

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Electoral Commission Guidance.

**7. KEY**

A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election.

A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.

A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Polling Stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.

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**

Name: Darren Whitney  
E Mail: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk  
Tel: 01527 881650