

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**18TH NOVEMBER 2008**

**ANNUAL POLLING STATION REVIEW**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor R. D. Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Mrs. C. L. Felton

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To undertake an annual review of all Polling Districts and Polling Places within the District of Bromsgrove in compliance with The Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the review of polling districts and places shown at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires all local authorities in England and Wales to undertake a full review of Polling Districts and Polling Places every 4 years. An annual review of polling places is considered good practice.
- 3.2 In undertaking the review, the Council must seek to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, and have regard to the needs of electors who are disabled.
- 3.3 This review is not concerned with alterations to Ward boundaries, only Polling Districts and the situation of polling stations.
- 3.4 Consultation has been sought from District Council Members, Parish Councillors and Parish Clerks.

4. **FINDINGS**

- 4.1 All polling places and polling stations within the District have been evaluated in terms of suitability and accessibility. The law says that facilities for voting must be reasonable and practicable. What this means in practice is a matter of

judgement, but there is certainly no duty on the Council to make an unreasonably high level of provision, or to provide facilities in locations where it is impracticable to do so.

#### 4.2 Representations Received

Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer has commented that the size and style of the portable building unit used at the by-election held in Slideslow Ward earlier this year needed to be reviewed.

### 5. REVISIONS RECOMMENDED

5.1 Whitford Polling District (VA) - more suitable premises for use as a polling station have been identified to replace the Sanders Park Pavilion for this polling district. The Girl Guide Building, Kidderminster Road, has recently been upgraded to meet the Disabilities Act recommendations, with a suitable ramped access and double door leading to a large hall; it also has full kitchen and toilet facilities for staff with ample car parking and a public footpath leading to the location.

5.2 To respond to Councillor Mrs. Spencer's comments, portable building units are only used as a last resort when permanent buildings are unavailable in an area. However, specifications for these have been revised to larger units with two doors wherever possible enabling an entrance and an exit facility and new suppliers are being sought for future elections. Other improvements that are being looked at are the provision of a more permanent supply of electricity for the portable units to reduce the need for the hire of noisy portable generators.

### 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are cost implications for the provision of larger portable units and the possible permanent supply of electricity for up to three sites using portable building units; these should be included within the medium term financial plan.

### 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. In accordance with the requirements of section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

### 8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

8.1. Helping to meet the needs of our customers by eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

### 9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 There are no significant risks associated with the details included in this report.

10. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Changes of polling stations will be identified to the elector by a special note included on their polling card.

11. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 By addressing the issues with regard to access to the Polling Stations the Council is improving access to all areas of the Community.

12. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Not applicable in this case.

13. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues Quotations for the hire of larger portable buildings and the provision of permanent electricity supply are being sought. It is estimated that each larger units will be an additional £200 and for the provision of a permanent electricity supply at £900 per site, which should be offset at future elections as there would be no need to hire generators and their associated costs.
Personnel Implications None
Governance / Performance Management None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 None
Policy None
Environmental None

14. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive as Returning Officer	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	No

Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

15. **WARDS AFFECTED**

Norton, Slideslow, Stoke Heath and Whitford Wards

16. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 List of Polling Districts and Polling Stations

**CONTACT OFFICER**

Name: Susan Mould, Electoral Services Manager

email: s.mould@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881462