

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

**18TH NOVEMBER 2009**

**ANNUAL POLLING STATION REVIEW**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor G. N. Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire 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 practise.
- 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 and County 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.

#### Representations Received

- 4.2 A request has been received from Bentley Pouncefoot Parish Council to consider returning to Bentley Village Hall following recent improvements.
- 4.3 A request has been received from Blackwell Methodist Church Hall to consider an alternative venue.

#### **5. REVISIONS RECOMMENDED**

- 5.1 Electors for the Bentley Pouncefoot Polling District (TAA) currently vote at the Church Hall at Tardebigge, which involves some distance to travel. Bentley Village Hall has recently been upgraded to meet the Disabilities Act recommendations with a suitable ramped access leading to double doors and the interior has been completely refurbished to a high standard for use as polling station.
- 5.2 Electors for Burcot Polling District (LTA), Linthurst Polling District (LTB) and the Shepley Polling District (LTC) currently vote at the Methodist Church Hall, Green Hill, Blackwell. An alternative location for a polling station has been located at The Wheel, St Catherine's Church, Blackwell. This room is in the centre of the village and fully accessible under the Disabilities Act recommendations; it is of a high standard and has all suitable facilities for use as a polling station.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There will be a cost for rent and employment of election staff for the additional polling station at Bentley.

#### **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
None
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 Councillor G. N. Denaro	Yes
Chief Executive as Returning Officer	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes

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**

Linthurst Ward and Tardebigge Ward.

**16. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 List of Polling Districts and Polling Stations

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