

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

20TH JANUARY 2010

ST JOHNS WEST (SJA) POLLING STATION REVIEW

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor G. N. Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To undertake a review of the St. John's West Polling District (SJA) polling place with the likelihood of the imminent demolition of the current polling place, the Market Hall, St. John Street, Bromsgrove.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee approve and adopt as the alternative polling place for the St. Johns West Polling District (SJA) either:

- (a) United Reformed Church Hall, Windsor Street, Bromsgrove; or
(b) The Communal Room, Willow Court, Willow Road, Bromsgrove.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Market Hall, St. John Street, Bromsgrove is currently the approved polling place for the St. John's West Polling District (SJA) and is under tender to be demolished in early 2010. A General Election must be held by 3rd June 2010 and an alternative polling place is required to be approved for use at this election if the Market Hall is no longer available for use.

- 3.2 Consultation has been sought from District and County Council Members.

4. **FINDINGS**

- 4.1 All polling places and polling stations within the District are 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 The United Reformed Church Hall, Windsor Street, Bromsgrove has previously been used as a polling place. It has a large main room suitable for use as a polling station and the toilet facilities have recently been renovated to DDA standards. There are two small steps to the double door entrance to the Hall which will require a temporary ramp to be put into place at an election. The owners of the Hall have indicated that they are seeking finance to provide a permanent ramp to this door. Car parking at the Hall is limited but there is a public car park within 20 metres.

4.3 Willow Court, Willow Road, Bromsgrove has also previous been used as a polling place. It has a large communal room which is suitable for use as a polling station whilst still retaining security for the remainder of the sheltered accommodation. There is good car parking, kitchen and toilet facilities and the communal room has a separate access which is fully DDA compliant.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There will be a cost for provision of a temporary ramp for access where there is small step at the double door entrance to the United Reformed Church Hall which can be recovered from the General Election accounts claim.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Review of polling places is conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

7. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

7.1 CO3 - Sense of Community and Well Being - Helping to meet the needs of our customers by eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

8. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

9. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

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

10. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

11. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Not applicable in this case.

12. **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

13. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. 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

14. **WARDS AFFECTED**

St. John's Ward

15. **APPENDICES**

None

CONTACT OFFICER

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