



Committee and date
Full Council
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Item
22
Public

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REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2016

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report details the findings of a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in the Parliamentary Constituencies in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006).
- 1.2 The main purpose of this review in respect of specific polling stations, is to ensure electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that polling stations are accessible to electors who are disabled. The guidelines also state that every parish should be in its own polling district and that every polling place should, where possible, be in its own polling district.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approves the following changes which have been agreed with Division Members, in order for them to be implemented on or by 1 January 2017. That delegated powers be given to the Returning Officer to find a suitable alternative, in conjunction with local members, should any polling station not be available for a particular election.

DIVISION	PROPOSED CHANGES
SIA Copthorne Division (Part of)	It is recommended Woodfield County Infants School be replaced by Copthorne Army Reserve Centre.
SPB Porthill Division (Part of)	It is recommended Woodfield County Infants School be replaced by Copthorne Army Reserve Centre.
SOB Monkmoor Division (Part of)	It is recommended Crowmoor Primary School be replaced by Shrewsbury Baptist Church Community Hall.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The Council is obliged to conduct a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations on a regular basis as are required to keep the electoral arrangements within its area up to date.
- 3.2 There is no anticipated environmental impact associated with the recommendations in the report.
- 3.3 The recommendation is not at variance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and is unlikely to result in any adverse Human Rights Act implications. The recommendations are in line with relevant legal procedures prescribed by the Act and with guidance issued by the Home Office.
- 3.4 Any amendments to the current polling districts, polling places and polling stations will take into account the provisions of the Equalities Act, Representation of People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006), and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 3.5 The Council must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- 3.6 The Council must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Appendix 1 gives increased costs where they have occurred based on the hire charges applied for the EU Referendum held last June 2016. There will be a total increase of £470 per Parliamentary and Unitary election if all of the proposals are accepted.

5. Background

- 5.1 All polling stations were inspected during the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2016 and the EU Referendum in June 2016. Following these inspections it became necessary to review a number of venues.
- 5.2 Existing polling arrangements were assessed and the views of interested groups and individuals were invited. These included Parliamentary Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham, Members of the Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and organisations who cater for the specific needs of people with different disabilities.

- 5.3 It is planned that any changes resulting from the review would be implemented on or by 1 January 2017 in advance of the Unitary, Town and Parish Election on 4 May 2017.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

Electoral Commission Guidance on Review of Polling Districts and Places

Cabinet Member

Councillor Michael Wood

Local Members

Councillor Pam Moseley

Councillor Peter Nutting

Councillor Anne Chebsey

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Proposals

SHREWSBURY AND ATCHAM CONSTITUENCY**COPTHORNE****Existing Arrangements**

Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	No. of Stations in Venue
SIA	Copthorne	Woodfield County Infants School	937	2

Returning Officer's Proposals

Comments had been received from the Headteacher, parents and division Member raising concerns over the closure of the school, and requesting that alternative venues be considered.

Officers considered the concerns raised and identified alternative venues. It should be noted that the current polling station, and the proposed polling station are outside the division boundary as there are no viable venues within the division at the present time. Following site visits to each venue, Copthorne Army Reserve Centre has been identified as a suitable alternative.

The proposals would incur additional venue hire charges of £350. There would be no increase to staff costs.

Following consultation with the Division Members, and no adverse comments being received from Daniel Kawczynski MP, Shrewsbury Town Council, and Shrewsbury Access Group, it is concluded that the proposal would be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Copthorne Army Reserve Centre replace Woodfield County Infants School as the polling station for SIA Copthorne (Part Of).

PORTHILL**Existing Arrangements**

Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	No. of Stations in Venue
SPB	Porthill	Woodfield County Infants School	1934	2

Returning Officer's Proposals

Comments had been received from the Headteacher, parents and division members raising concerns over the closure of the school, and requesting that alternative venues be considered.

Officers considered the concerns raised and identified alternative venues within the division boundary. Following site visits to each venue, Copthorne Army Reserve Centre has been identified as a suitable alternative.

The proposals would incur additional venue hire charges of £350. There would be no increase to staff costs.

Following consultation with the Division Members, and no adverse comments being received from Daniel Kawczynski MP, Shrewsbury Town Council, and Shrewsbury Access Group, it is concluded that the proposal would be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Copthorne Army Reserve Centre replace Woodfield County Infants School as the polling station for SPB Porthill (Part Of).

MONKMOOR

Existing Arrangements

Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station	Electors	No. of Stations in Venue
SOB	Monkmoor	Crowmoor Primary School	1799	2

Returning Officer's Proposals

Comments had been received from the Polling Station Inspector and Presiding Officers advising there had been access issues during the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2016, and the EU Referendum in June 2016. Unlike previous years, the school remained open on polling day which had caused issues for electors accessing the car park. This was due to security barriers being in place and only disabled voters being able to access the parking provision. Concern had also been raised over unauthorised access to the polling station by school staff in order to access other parts of the building.

Officers considered the concerns raised and identified an alternative venue within the division boundary. Following a site visit, Shrewsbury Baptist Church Community Hall has been identified as a suitable alternative.

The proposals would incur additional venue hire charges of £120. There would be no increase to staff costs.

Following consultation with the Division Member, and no adverse comments being received from Daniel Kawczynski MP, Shrewsbury Town Council, and Shrewsbury Access Group, it is concluded that the proposal would be acceptable.

RECOMMENDED:

It is recommended that Shrewsbury Baptist Church Community Hall replace Crowmoor Primary School as the polling station for SOB Monkmoor division (part of).