


General Purposes and Arbitration Committee

19 March 2018

Subject:	Polling Stations Report
Director:	Director - Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Tracey Hurst. Electoral Services Manager. tracey_hurst@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee:

1. To endorse the existing provision of the 154 Polling Stations as outlined in appendix 1 for the Local Elections taking place on the 3 May 2018.
2. For a statutory review of UK parliamentary polling districts and polling places be undertaken by the Director – Monitoring Officer in the next municipal year between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).
3. A further report outlining the findings and recommendations of the review be presented to the committee as soon as possible thereafter.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To confirm the current proposals for polling stations for the local elections 2018 as outlined in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 To inform the committee of the need to carry out a statutory review of existing polling stations; and seek authority to undertake that review.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 An effective polling district and polling place scheme supports Sandwell Councils Vision 2030, Ambition 10.

Ambition 10.

Sandwell now has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The committee is requested to endorse the use of the existing provision of polling stations as appended to this report for the Local Elections, 3 May 2018.
- 3.2 Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) sets out that the each local authority must designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area.
- 3.3 Paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 of the RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations, shall allocate electors to those polling stations, and those polling stations shall be in the polling place for that district.

At least once every four years a review of all polling districts and polling places is required to be carried out in accordance to the legislative requirements as detailed below.

- 3.5 Section 18C(1) of the RPA 1983 sets out that local authorities must carry out and complete a review of polling districts and polling places in the period specified by section 18C(2)(a) of the RPA 1983. This means that all local authorities must review their

UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places at least once every four years.

- 3.6 The next statutory review must be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).
- 3.7 An outline of the process is set out at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.8 A detailed assessment of the suitability of both existing and proposed alternative polling stations will be undertaken, which will assess each station against a defined criteria/yardstick.
- 3.9 The findings of the review will be analysed and presented to the committee for consideration, along with appropriate recommendations.

4 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 4.1 As part of the statutory polling district and polling place review consultations will take place between all of the relevant stakeholders in relation to the existing provision of polling stations as detailed in appendix 1 and in relation to any alternative proposals.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 As part of the formal polling place review alternative options to the existing provision of polling stations will be considered, a final report will be presented to this committee for approval in the new municipal year.

6 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The use of polling stations is already included within the existing budgetary provision for the conduct of local elections and as such no financial implications are outlined in this report.

7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The legal implications are set out in the main body of this report.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 As part of the formal review that will take place when assessing the location of polling places, accessibility issues will be investigated to ensure that proposed polling stations have access to voters with disabilities.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will be in force when the polling districts and polling places review commences.
- 9.2 Officers will ensure that regulations are considered and included in the review to ensure compliance with regards to the use of personal data.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 As part of the formal review risk assessments will be carried out on all existing and proposed stations prior to any recommendations.

11 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 11.1 The review will consider the long-term availability of polling stations and places to ensure there is stability and certainty for voters so far as reasonably possible.

12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 13.1 Ensuring that the council elections arrangements are effectively managed helps ensure the electorate has confidence in and has the opportunity to engage in the democratic function.

13 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 13.1 A number of council premises are used as polling stations which has an impact on the use of those premises for normal/usual business. Mitigating measures are taken where possible to minimise any disruption.

14 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 This report provides details of the polling stations to be used for the Local Elections taking place on 3 May 2018.
- 14.2 This report also provides details of the planned formal review of polling districts and polling places pursuant to Section 18C(1) of the RPA 1983.
- 14.3 The review will be carried out between 1 October 2018 and must be completed by 31 January 2020.
- 14.4 A subsequent report outlining the findings and recommendations as a result of the review will be returned for approval by this committee.

15 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 Not applicable

16 APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Schedule of polling stations for use at the Local Election 3 May 2018.

Appendix 2 - Formal review process (Schedule A1 steps)

Surjit Tour
Director – Monitoring Officer
Appendix 1

