

CHANGES TO POLLING STATION LOCATIONS FOR NEWTON AND LANGLEY WARDS**1. LANGLEY WARD****i. Polling District LAB/LAG (2321)**

The current polling station and the one used at the last local election is the car park at the St Johns ambulance car park. The Electoral Services Manager has been advised that the St Ambulance building has been sold and will no longer be available to be used.

Option 1

A grassed area measuring 198 square feet situated on York Road has been identified as an alternative area to the portable cabin. This area is c.450 meters away from the current polling place which constitutes a five minute walk for electors. The Electoral Services Manager together with the Property services manager has inspected this site and whilst portable cabins offer logistical and financial implications for the Returning Officer the site would be easily accessible for the electorate. This option would not provide any efficiency savings. The cost of the portable building is £1400. There are no additional costs for the use of the land. The location of the proposed site is shown in Appendix 2

Ward members have been consulted on this option and no adverse comments have been received.

Option 2

The use of the Bulls Head public house car park has been suggested by ward members to the Electoral Services Manager. This suggestion has been presented very close to the report being produced. An initial inspection has taken place of the car park and whilst it has been noted as being slightly uneven it is considered to be a suitable alternative site for a portable cabin, the main advantage to this being that it is situated opposite the existing polling place. Officers are waiting for confirmation of the cost implications which would include the cost of the hut itself and the hire of the car park. An update on this will be presented to the General Purposes committee at the meeting on the 29 October 2019. The location of the proposed site is shown in Appendix 2

Option 3

York Road Social and Sports Club.

Further consultation with ward members York Road Social and Sports Club has been identified as an alternative venue. Due to the timing of this information being received by officers, an update on investigations as to the availability and suitability of the Social club will be provided to members at the committee meeting. Securing this provision will offer potential efficiency savings; the use of a permanent fixture will remove the need for a portable building.

Recommendation:

- a) A verbal update will be presented to the Committee following further investigations around alternative provisions.
- b) That subject to no further recommendations being presented to the Committee the polling station be relocated to York Road for the Local Election on the 2 May 2019
- c) That all Parliamentary Constituency polling places and polling districts will be reviewed as part of the statutory review that will commence in May 2019

2. NEWTON WARD.

i. Polling District NEB (1007)

The current Polling Station is situated on a grassed verge on the corner of Meadowside Close as shown in Appendix 3

The Electoral Services Manager has received several communications from a resident of Meadowside Close expressing concerns and objections to the situation of the portable cabin. This is a long standing complaint that both officers and members have sought previous resolutions for.

Alternatives to the use of this site are very limited, officers have investigated this and the following options are presented to the committee for consideration.

Option 1

Status Quo

Keep the provision of the current arrangements at the existing site on Meadowside Close.

When accessing the suitability of Polling Station the Returning Officer needs to ensure that the station is adequately and safely accessed by all of the electorate. Officers would advise that at the Local Election on the 3 May this year one complaint as mentioned above was received in relation to the situation of the portable cabin, no other complaints were reported on Election Day. Presiding Officers did not feedback any adverse comments relating to the position of the portable cabin.

The complaint received is in relation to the Health and Safety implications when the unit is delivered and collected and the fumes and noise as a result of the generator. At the last election on the 3 May additional resources were allocated to supervise and monitor both the delivery and the collection of the unit. Should members decide to keep the status quo, officers would ensure the same provision is arranged for the elections taking place on the May 2019.

Officers are also investigating alternative types of portable units that provide a more suitable option. Furthermore, to mitigate the issues associated with the use of a generator, a site visit is taking place by officers to assess the use of a direct electrical connection to remove the need for a generator.

Ward members have been consulted and support keeping the status quo for the Local Elections taking place on the 2 May 2019

Option 2

Ferndale Primary School.

To merge polling district NEB (1007) with NEC (2000) using Ferndale Primary School as the sole polling place for the merged districts. The distance between Ferndale Primary School and the portable cabin Meadowside Close is c.1.0km. The current maximum distance is c.875m which would increase to c.1.2km for some of the electorate in NEB.

Officers would advise that the school is not always closed by the head teacher for every election, parking and congestion has been raised at previous elections by presiding officers, and this could potentially be more problematic with the introduction of another station in the same Polling Place, particularly if the school take the decision to remain open.

In merging the Polling Districts of NEB and NEC an efficiency saving would be delivered, the cost of the use of the school is £100 to cover the costs of heating and lighting provisions compared to £1500 for the portable cabin.

Ward members have been consulted and are not in support of the use of Ferndale School for the Local Elections 2 May 2019.

No other suitable locations have been currently identified for Newton Ward.

Recommendation:

- a) A verbal update will be presented to the Committee following further investigations into alternative more suitable temporary accommodation.
- b) That subject to no further recommendations being presented to the Committee the Status Quo be adopted and the polling station remain unchanged for the Local Election on the 2 May 2019
- c) That all Parliamentary Constituency polling places and polling districts will be reviewed as part of the statutory review that will commence in May 2019

3 NEXT STEPS

- a) All electors whose Polling Place will change will receive a letter from the electoral services unit notifying them of the change along with information about the new station including a map showing the location.
- b) Adequate signage will be provided at both the new Polling Station and the old Polling Station to ensure voters are informed and fully aware of any changes so it is clear where they need to go to cast their vote.
- c) The changes will also be noted on all Poll Cards that are issued to electors in the Langley and Newton wards.