


General Purposes and Arbitration Committee

04 March 2019

Subject:	Changes to Polling Places to be used for the Local Election 2 May 2019
Director:	Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Tracey Hurst. Electoral Services Manager. tracey_hurst@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Considers the proposed changes to polling place/stations in the Bristnall and Wednesbury South Wards as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Recommend the Council to approve the polling place/stations in the Bristnall and Wednesbury South Wards.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Officers have been advised that two current polling places are not available for use for the Local Election on the 2 May 2019. This report sets out two proposed changes to polling places/stations in the Bristnall and Wednesbury South wards for the Committee to consider and agree.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 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.

- 2.2 The proposals and planned compulsory wider review of polling districts, places and stations helps ensure that the electorate can effectively engage in democracy arrangements and influence the future direction of the Council.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Section 18B of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983 states the authority must designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area. Each polling district must have a polling place and it is the duty of the Council to designate polling places and keep them under review. The Council is required, so far as is reasonable and practicable designate polling places which are accessible to disabled electors.
- 3.2 Paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 to 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.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out the details of the two polling places that are unavailable for use on the 2 May 2019 along with the alternative proposal and recommendations.

THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Appendix 1 details the proposed changes to Polling Stations in Bristnall and Wednesbury South wards.
- 4.2 Officers will carry out a further assessment of the proposed alternative Polling Places for the Wednesbury South ward. An update and other relevant issues and factors if necessary will be provided at the meeting of the Committee.
- 4.3 Section 18C(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) 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.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 Relevant Ward Councillors have been consulted in relation to the alternative polling places detailed in Appendix 1.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 Alternative options to the current polling places are set out in Appendix 1

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The financial implications have been set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Section 18B of the RPA Act 1983 states the authority must designate the polling places for the polling districts in its area. Paragraph 25 of Schedule 1 to 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.
- 8.2 A building should not be designated that does not have access for the disabled if another suitable building is available in the polling district. However, a building would not be a more suitable polling place if it were so far removed from most of the electors in the polling district.
- 8.3 Section 18C(1) (RPA 1983) states 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. Paragraph 25(1) of Schedule 1 to the RPA 1983 states that the Returning Officer must provide sufficient numbers of polling stations and allot electors to those polling stations. The next compulsory review must be started and complete between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive). The review will undertake all the legislative steps set out in Schedule A1 to the RPA 1983 as detailed in Appendix 4.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Review included use of the Electoral Commissions Evaluation Checklist which addresses equality and diversity issues relevant to Polling Districts, Places and Stations. Accessibility for members of minority or disadvantaged groups is a key issue in the selection of suitable Polling Stations. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The proposals are in line with data protection regulations.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to ensure a polling place exists in each of its polling districts.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 Not applicable

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 13.1 Not applicable

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 14.1 Not applicable

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Considers the proposed changes to polling place/stations in the Bristnall and Wednesbury South Wards as set out in Appendix 1 to this report
- 15.2 Recommend the Council to approve the polling place/stations in the Bristnall and Wednesbury South Wards.
- 15.3 A verbal update will be presented to the Committee following further investigations to the proposed change in the Bristnall Ward.
- 15.4 The recommendations will help ensure that elections and referenda held within the borough are conducted effectively.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.5 Not applicable

16 APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Changes to Polling Stations for the Local Elections 2 May 2019.

Surjit Tour

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer