



# Meeting of the City Council

## 28 January 2015

<b>Report title</b>	Changes to polling stations	
<b>Referring body</b>	n/a	
<b>Councillor to present report</b>	Cllr Paul Sweet Governance and Performance	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Cabinet Member with lead responsibility</b>	Cllr Paul Sweet Governance and Performance	
<b>Strategic director</b>	Keith Ireland Returning Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Democratic Services	
<b>Contact employee(s)</b>	Martyn Sargeant Tel Email	Head of Democratic Services 01902 555043 <a href="mailto:martyn.sargeant@wolverhampton.gov.uk">martyn.sargeant@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	n/a	

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Approve that Gatis Street Adventure Playground (St Peter's ward) be replaced by the tenants' room at Firsbrook House as a polling station for the 2015 elections.
2. Approve that Duke Street Youth Club (East Park ward) be replaced by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Oxford Street as a polling station for the 2015 elections
3. Delegate any further changes to the schedule of polling stations for the 2015 elections to the (Acting) Returning Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Governance and Performance.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To approve changes to polling stations for the 2015 elections, which have resulted from agreed premises no longer being available, and to delegate responsibility to the Returning Officer to make any future changes should they be required.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 November, the Council approved the polling station arrangements for the 2015 Parliamentary and city elections, following the statutory review of polling places, stations and districts.
- 2.2 Since then, the Council has been notified that two premises will not be available by 7 May. It is necessary, therefore, to make suitable alternative arrangements.

## **3.0 Proposed changes**

- 3.1 Gatis Street Adventure Playground (St Peter's ward): the Council is disposing of this property and it will therefore not be available for use as a polling station. The (Acting) Returning Officer has identified the tenants' room at Firsbrook House as a suitable alternative. It is approximately 300 metres from the original location and actually closer for most residents.
- 3.2 Duke Street Youth Club (East Park ward): the Council is also seeking to dispose of this property. Two alternatives were identified: the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which is approximately 100 metres from the original station; or creating a shared station at the Workspace, which is situated just across the ward boundary in Ettingshall, about a kilometre from the original location. Whilst the latter option would result in a small financial saving, the Returning Officer believes the former option would be more convenient for voters and most likely to encourage participation.
- 3.3 It is possible that a small number of further changes may be required prior to the election (e.g. due to fire or vandalism, or sale of premises). Because of the infrequency of Council meetings and the short timescales involved in the administration of the election (e.g. in issuing poll cards), it is proposed that authority to effect such changes should be delegated to the (Acting) Returning Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance and Governance.

## **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for funding the cost of local elections, but is reimbursed by the government for its reasonable costs incurred in the administration of national and European elections and referenda. There will be a small additional cost to hiring the church for East Park ward but this will be covered by the Electoral Services budget for local elections.

[GE/20012015/P]

## **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 The Council is legally required under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 to conduct a review of polling districts, places and stations every five years, within a set 16 month period. The Council is then responsible for making changes to polling stations agreed for a Parliamentary election.

[KO/20012015/F]

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 The proposed polling stations have been assessed to ensure suitable access for the disabled and elderly. A full equalities analysis was carried out as part of the review of polling stations in 2014.

## **7.0 Environmental implications**

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## **9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 9.1 The two premises that are no longer available are part of the corporate landlord disposals programme, but there are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

Review of polling places, polling stations and polling districts: Council, 5 November 2014