

Special Advisory Group

16 November 2018

Report title	Situation of Polling Stations for the 2019 local elections	
Cabinet Member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Governance	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Jen Brake, Service Director of Strategy and Change	
Originating service	Electoral Services	
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Report to be/has been considered by	n/a	

Recommendations for decision:

The Special Advisory Group is recommended to recommend that Council:

1. Agree that polling stations for the local election should be unchanged from those used at the 2018 local election with the exception that three stations will have a slight location change but will still remain in the polling district.
2. Delegate responsibility to make any operational changes to polling stations to the Returning Officer, following consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Governance and the Leader of the Opposition.

Recommendation for noting:

The Special Advisory Group is asked to note:

1. That the statutory polling place review will commence in May 2019, shortly after the local election, in readiness for changes to be implemented by 2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report outlines the arrangements for polling stations for the 2019 local election and provides an update on the timeline for commencing the statutory polling place review in 2019.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the Council has a duty to conduct a complete review of polling places and districts every five years. The next review must take place between October 2018 and January 2020. The Council conducted the first such review in 2014, with some follow-up work taking place in 2015 after the general election. All councillors have been given the opportunity to provide feedback on existing polling station arrangements to inform the statutory polling place review and they will be invited to feedback formally as part of the consultation next year.
- 2.2 Although there is not a statutory requirement to review polling stations, the Council routinely evaluates its arrangements after each election, and minor amendments were made for the 2018 election which included reducing the number of polling station locations in Wednesfield North from six to five and merging two polling districts to take the total number of polling districts from seven to six. The Council approved 129 polling stations across the city for use at the 2018 local elections.

3.0 Polling stations

- 3.1 The proposal is to keep the 129 polling stations for use in the 2019 local elections, with a slight location change for three as outlined below. Please see **Appendix 1** for list of polling stations.
- 3.2 In the 2018 local election, an additional temporary polling station was used in LIA polling district on the Springvale House site due to the Springvale Sports and Social Club being unavailable. This site is scheduled to be under further construction in May 2019, therefore the temporary polling station will be placed on Weston Drive, opposite Morville Croft, which is within the LIA district.
- 3.3 The polling station for the joint Heath Town and St Peter's polling station was based in the Training Room in the Civic Centre for the 2018 local election. This will be based in Committee Room 5 with access via the business reception due to the equipment in the training room which may hinder polling station set up.
- 3.4 The two schools on Regis Road alternate as a polling station in Tettenhall for SIB and SJB. In the 2018 elections, the polling station was at The Kings School. For 2019 it will be at Tettenhall Wood School.

3.5 Electoral Services will review how well these polling stations work at the 2019 local election to continue to inform the statutory polling place review which will formally commence after the 2019 local election.

4.0 Statutory polling place review

4.1 The purpose of the review is to examine the 129 polling districts within the 20 wards in the city to ensure that the polling districts are well defined and do not exceed the maximum 2,500 electorate. Each polling district has a polling place where the polling station is located. The other part of the review is to ensure that polling stations are suitable in terms of location, size, availability and accessibility.

4.2 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), Leader and Chair of Special Advisory Group have signed off the timeline for the review which will formally commence in May 2019 after the next local election, with preliminary work currently underway. The formal consultation will conclude in July 2019 and a final report will be taken to Full Council in October 2019, ready for any changes to be published in the revised register on 1 December 2019, and new polling station arrangements to be instated for 2020 elections.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 The costs of funding polling stations are covered from the existing revenue budget for local elections. It is anticipated that the changes to polling stations set out in this report will be cost neutral. Any financial implications of changes made under delegated authority will be considered on a case by case basis, however it is expected at this stage that these would also be cost neutral.

[ES/06112018/O]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 Under the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the Council has a duty to conduct a statutory review of polling places and districts every five years. In between such reviews, the Council has to ensure the adequate and appropriate provision of polling stations for each election or referendum.

[RB/25102018/X]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 No changes are proposed to the Council's provision of polling stations, so an equalities analysis is not required. However, the Returning Officer monitors the operation of polling stations and collects feedback from voters via Presiding Officers to ensure appropriate provision for all sections of the community.

8.0 Environmental implications

8.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

9.0 Human resources implications

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

10.0 Corporate Landlord implications

10.1 The Returning Officer maximises use of Council-owned or publicly-funded buildings in order to manage costs. Due to a diminishing asset portfolio, some buildings are rented privately.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Polling stations, Full Council, 13 December 2017

<https://wolverhamptonintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s60674/Item%207%20-%20Council%20Covering%20Report%20Polling%20Stations%20-.pdf>

11.2 Statutory Polling Place Review, Confident, Capable Scrutiny Panel, 26 September 2018

<https://wolverhamptonintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s87541/Polling%20place%20review%20briefing%20note%20-%20scrutiny%20panel.pdf>

12.0 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: Polling Stations – Local Elections 2019