

Electoral Matters Committee

Wednesday, 13th
December, 2023

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Peter Fleming (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith and Monica Stringfellow

Officers: Darren Witney and Melissa Bassett

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Luke Court.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 26th September 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

13. STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023

The Committee considered a report setting out submissions received during the consultation on the review of polling districts and polling places, which had been carried out between 2 October and 13 November, as well as the views of the electoral services team.

Four responses had been received to the consultation. Whilst most were in favour of the current or proposed changes to the polling

Chair

places, a suggestion had been made that St Stephen's polling district should be renamed 'Town Centre'.

During consideration of the report, members of the Committee supported the actions taken by officers in relation to Polling districts HOC, NRB, NRC and WCD which were split by County Council electoral division boundaries. Officers had split these into two sections, and they would have the suffix 2 added after the second section. This allowed for administration of a County Council by-election if one was called in the near future.

It was noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England was due to make its recommendations on revised County Council electoral divisions on 9 January and the implications of this could be considered by the Committee in due course.

Officers updated the Committee on the current situation regarding polling station sites in potential polling place HOD, Wirehill. Of the three sites suggested, the contractor who provided temporary buildings for elections had discounted Woodrow Drive as it would present practical obstacles to installation. Whilst officers had approached the owners of the other two sites, and had provided further details to both, they had not received positive responses from either. Members agreed that of the two remaining sites, Atwood Close would be their preferred option. This site was currently owned by Homes England, and it was suggested it might be part of current discussions between them and the Borough Council about potential land transfers. Officers would check this point. If Officers were unable to reach agreement on the use of Atwood Close, then the polling place would remain within Oakenshaw South Polling District.

Councillor Peter Fleming expressed the view that the name of Polling District CEA, St Stephen's, should not be changed. The name featured in the electoral history of the Borough and to change it would be inconsistent with the usual convention for naming polling districts. This was agreed.

Members noted details about the publication of the register of electors which had been published on 1 December using current boundaries. The version to be published on 2 January would

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feature the new ward boundaries and would be used to prepare for the elections. Copies of the January register would be supplied to local political parties on request and automatically if they had requested a copy of the register published on 1 December. Individual members would not be able to have a copy of the January register due to the changes to the ward boundaries. However, the elections team could assist councillors with any individual queries.

RESOLVED that

1. that the final proposals in respect of Polling Districts and Polling Places, as contained in Appendix 1 (as amended), be approved; and
2. that the decisions of the Committee in respect of 1 above take effect from the date of poll any election/referendum held or on publication of the revised Register of Electors.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 6.52 pm