

REDDITCH POLLING PLACE AMENDMENT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor J Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Ward(s) Affected	Central
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Yes
Non-Key Decision	Yes

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The report sets out where a change may be made to a Polling Place in advance of the May Elections. This is an additional change to the agreed Polling Districts and Polling Places review made in 2014.
- 1.2 The recommendations below set out below are arising from investigations and Members comments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to RESOLVE

whether having considered the contents of this report to

- 2.1 **Change the polling place for the electors in Polling District CEB from a portable building in the car park of the REDI Centre to the REDI Centre itself;**
- 2.2 **that if 2.1 is accepted to take effect for May 2017 elections.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The current cost of the portable building used is £1,275. It is anticipated that there will be significant savings to this cost in using the Redi Centre and officers are currently discussing the financial contribution with RYCE.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 a) Authority to set Polling District boundaries and to designate Polling Places rests with the Council (Statutory elements of the Council's Constitution under the Local Government Act 2000).

b) Decisions about the situation of Polling Stations within designated Polling Places are for the (Acting) Returning Officer. Arrangements must comply with relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Acts and Regulations and the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 "Relevant authorities" (such as Redditch Borough Council) must

"a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the Constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances"; and

"b) seek to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled and, when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons. If it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal, then every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access for all electors."

Service/Operational Implications

3.4 A review of Polling Places and Stations for Redditch was carried out in 2014.

3.5 The management of the REDI Centre approached officers to ask if Redditch Borough Council would like to use a room for a polling station.

3.6 Officers visited the centre and found usability was much better than the current arrangements:

- There is much better access (including disabled) from both Ipsley Street and South Street.
- There are better kitchen facilities available for staff and toilet facilities for staff and electors.
- Not having the portable building would provide extra parking for staff and electors.

3.7 REDI Centre management are in discussion with officers as to the level of cost that will be incurred in the provision of the polling station. It is assumed this will cover any lost income and any direct costs.

Customer/Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.9 The Council's policies directly cross-relate, particularly in relation to Access issues. Accessibility for members of minority or disadvantaged groups is a key issue in the selection of suitable Polling Stations. In this case disabled access is enhanced considerably.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Choice of Polling Place / Polling Station should not give rise to significant grounds of complaint which might put election results at risk of challenge.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Electoral Commission Guidance.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Darren Whitney

email: darren.whitney@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk