

# Electoral Matters Committee

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Wednesday, 11th  
September, 2019

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer (Chair), Councillor Mike Rouse (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Michael Chalk, Greg Chance and Bill Hartnett

### Officers:

Claire Felton, Darren Whitney and Melissa Bassett

### Democratic Services Officers:

Amanda Scarce

#### 4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 6. MINUTES

##### RESOLVED that

**The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 be held as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

#### 7. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report and explained that all submissions and summaries from the initial consultation, which ran from 17<sup>th</sup> July to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019, had been included within the various appendices. The full submissions were available should Members wish to look at them in more detail. Members were reminded that under legislation the Council was required to hold a formal review of Polling District and Polling Places at regular intervals.

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Chair

The proposals within the report set out Officers' proposals arising from the review and initial consultation. Members were asked to consider the proposals and make recommendations for the final consultation, which would be carried out from 12<sup>th</sup> September to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019. The results of which would inform the final results of the review.

The types of venues used were discussed and the Electoral Services Manager explained the pitfalls and benefits of using various venues, including cost, accessibility for those with a disability and suitability for those staff facilitating the polling stations.

In respect of the proposed Polling District boundary changes Members were reminded that these had not been reviewed for a considerable time and electoral officers with the help of GIS officers had reviewed the polling District boundaries and recommended a number of small changes. These merely affected Polling District boundaries and not Ward, Parish or County Division ones, therefore simply affecting where electors would go to vote.

Members went on to consider each ward and the changes/comments received, with the following being agreed by the Committee:

#### **Abbey Ward ABA and ABC**

Members discussed the impact of new developments on this ward and agreed that, whilst there were difficulties in accessing the Baptist Church for a small number of electors, the suggested amendment was sensible. However, the Electoral Services Manager agreed that with the continued developments in the area, this would be something to consider in the future.

#### **Batchley and Brockhill Ward BYD and BYB**

Members were in agreement with this change as it affected a small number of electors.

#### **Central Ward CEA, CEB and CEC**

This made perfect sense to Members and all were in agreement to the change.

#### **Crabbs Cross CCB and CCC**

Members were in agreement with the suggested changes.

#### **Headless Cross and Oakenshaw HOA, HOB and HOC**

Members were in agreement with the suggested changes.

### **Lodge Park LPB and LPA**

Members were in agreement with the suggested change to address the small anomaly along Holloway Lane.

### **Winyates WIA and WIB**

It was noted that no residents or properties were affected by this change and therefore it was agreed by Members.

The Electoral Services Manager then took Members through the proposals for final consultation (as detailed in Appendix 1) line by line, with the following comments being noted in respect of those where changes had been proposed:

### **Astwood Bank and Feckenham AFB**

It was noted that the public house had been approached, but had not been interested in being used as a polling station. After discussing a number of alternatives it was agreed that there would be no change.

### **Church Hill CHB**

It was noted that St Andrews Methodist Church could service the electors, however following discussions concerns were raised in respect of the lack of footpath for those attending on foot and also limited car parking. The distance from some electors was also considerably more. Members went on to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the current location, Abbeywood First School. Members were concerned about the disruption to the school; however concerns were also raised in respect of the financial impact of using portable buildings, the site of a portable building and whether the School would be prepared to make a contribution towards the cost in order for the school to remain open.

It was agreed that there would be no change to this polling station for the time being, but consideration would be given to a portable building if a site could be found within the Polling District and if the School would make a contribution towards the cost.

### **Headless Cross and Oakenshaw HOA**

It was agreed that whilst a number of alternatives had been considered, there would be no change. However, it was suggested that in future the Scout Hut on the Feckenham Road could be explored as an alternative.

### **Headless Cross and Oakenshaw HOD**

Members discussed the use of the Crabbs Cross Methodist Church and agreed that this was not suitable. It was agreed that there would be no change for this polling station.

### **Lodge Park LPA**

Concerns were raised by some Members in respect of using the Lodge Park Club as a venue. However, it was noted that it was a separate room and electors would not need to go through the main area of the Club. It was also suggested that part of the car park should be designated for electors, which was something which could be considered. Members agreed to the suggested change.

### **Lodge Park LPC**

Members discussed the suggested change due to the limited turnout, however concerns were raised in the distance the electors would have to walk and the need to either cross a busy road or use the underpass. This was of particular concern as those electors would be elderly. The cost implications of maintaining this polling station were requested by Members for the next meeting. It was decided that the change would be consulted on.

### **West WEA and WEB**

It was explained to Members that this was merely combining WEA and WEB Polling Districts – who currently both used the same polling station and were in the same Ward and County Division. Members were in agreement to this.

### **Winyates WIB**

Concerns were raised in respect of using the Roman Way First School, but no alternatives had been suggested. Members discussed the option to use the day nursery in the grounds of the school, which was separate from the main building and it was agreed that this was something which could be explored in the future.

### **RESOLVED that**

- 1. the proposals for Polling Districts in the report and appendices 1 and 2 (as amended) be published for final consultation; and**
  - 2. the proposals for Polling Places in appendices 1 and 3 (as amended) be published for final consultation.**
- 8. NEXT MEETING**

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee would be held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019;

# **Electoral Matters Committee**

**Wednesday, 11th September, 2019**

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.26 pm