



Electoral Matters Committee

Tuesday, 26th September,
2023

MINUTES

Present:

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

Officers:

Melissa Bassett, Sue Hanley and Darren Whitney

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Barker Smith reported that Councillor Fardoe, who had been a member of the Local Polling Districts and Places Review Working Group was unable to attend to observe the meeting. However, it was requested that it be noted that Councillor Fardoe had enjoyed taking part in the Working Group.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Matters Committee held on 11th July 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

9. LOCAL POLLING DISTRICT PLACES REVIEW

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report on the subject of Local Polling District Places Review. Members were advised that the report contained the findings of the Local Polling Districts and Places Review Working Group. During the meetings of the Working Group, Members had discussed individual Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations. During the investigation a number of changes had been suggested and informal site visits had been carried out by Members of the Working Group.

It was explained that there had been detailed discussion regarding the Headless Cross and Oakenshaw ward, during the meetings of the Working Group, and whether an additional Polling District could be created for the Wirehill area. Councillor Court had provided Officers with 7 potential sites within this area that could house a portable building for use as a potential Polling Station. The Electoral Services Manager explained that he had undertaken site visits along with the Senior Electoral Services Officer and the Senior Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Officer who provided advice and expertise on the potential locations.

The sites were reported as follows:

- Location 1 - This location was deemed unsuitable as there was not enough room to locate a temporary building, a toilet and a generator. It was also deemed too close to nearby houses.
- Location 2 – This site was thought to be a possibility; however, it would need to be confirmed if a lorry could access the site to deliver a portable building. Permission from Homes England would also need to be sought in order to use the land.
- Location 3 - This site was deemed unsuitable as any portable buildings would need to be sited on the road.
- Location 4 – This location was deemed unsuitable as there was not enough room to locate a temporary building, a toilet and a generator. It was also noted how busy the road was in this location.

- Location 5 – This was a potential site. However, concerns were raised as to whether the terrain was flat enough. Concerns were also raised regarding a mulch path that ran alongside the site and whether a lorry could access the site in order to deliver a portable building.
- Location 6 – This location was deemed unsuitable as it was in close proximity to a play area and there would not be enough room for a portable building, toilet and generator.
- Location 7 – This location was deemed unsuitable due to the close proximity to a balancing pond and there would be concerns regarding safety.

It was noted that should Members wish to progress with Locations 5-7 (as detailed above) permission would need to be sought from David Wilson Homes to use the land.

Members queried as to what the potential next steps would be and suggested that Officers contacted David Wilson Homes and Homes England to see if it would be possible, following consultation with residents to use these locations.

During consideration of the report, Members suggested an additional site that could be investigated. The site suggested was noted as Woodrow Drive, adjacent to the Alexandra Hospital. Some Members raised concerns about the terrain of this site and whether it would be too hilly. Furthermore, it was noted that the parking provision on this site may cause some issues although any potential Polling Station sited here would not need to be used by a large number of voters, there was no certainty that voters who attended would be pedestrians and that parking could still potentially be an issue.

The following changes were highlighted by Members during consideration of the remainder of the report and it was requested that Officers make the following changes to the Polling Districts:

Astwood Bank and Feckenham Ward

1. AFA – Polling District Name change from St Peter's to Crabbs Cross

2. AFC - Polling District Name change from St John's to Feckenham

Greenlands and Lakeside Ward

3. GLA – Polling District Name change from Riverside to Abbeydale
4. GLB - Polling District Name change from Holloway to Lakeside
5. GLC – Polling District Name change from Arrowcrest to Lodge Park
6. GLD - Polling District Name change from Throckmorton to Greenlands

Officers noted the amendments and undertook to make the changes as detailed above.

At the end of the discussion, Members thanked the Officers for their hard work during the Local Polling Districts and Places Review Working Group and further commented that it had been a thorough investigation and that all Members had worked successfully together.

RESOLVED that

1. Officers undertake further investigation of the following sites as potential future locations for a polling place, including landownership, permission to use the site and parking provision:
 1. Atworth Close
 2. Woodrow Drive
 3. Oakdale Close

and if one or more was feasible, that a polling district be created for the Wirehill area and named Wirehill otherwise the area to remain part of Oakenshaw South Polling District.

2. The above sites to be included in the statutory review public consultation due to commence on 2nd October 2023, along

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with the other ward information, as amended, included in the report.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.03 pm